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RM-5997-ARPA
OCTOBER 1969

FIGHTING AND NEGOTIATING IN VIETNAM: A STRATEGY

Vu Van Thai

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PREFACE

This Memorandum consolidates unpublished papers on Vietnam prepared by the author upon two occasions early in 1968: the Tet offensive and President Johnson's decision to reduce the bombing and call for negotiations. While some new ideas have been introduced in the interim, and certain parts clarified, little more has been done to the arguments in the original drafts than to suppress a few sentences on the total bombing halt and to update former reasoning, which in the author's opinion has adequately withstood subsequent development. The Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia, in particular, did not affect the author's earlier views concerning the desirability of encouraging diversification of interest of the communist world in Southeast Asia. He thinks it essential to encourage the development of Russian influence in this area. Also, in the light of the "Brezhnev Doctrine" and the changing character of Russian leadership of the western communist movements, it will be even more difficult for Russia and China to patch up their differences; China cannot accept, even tactically, the Russian concept of leadership, and it is now more difficult for Russia to make a special place for China in a communist world otherwise controlled by the threat of force.

The consolidated piece is in the nature of a political essay, written with the hope of stimulating thinking on policy formulation and strategy during the present phase of negotiations.

The author is aware of some of the deficiencies of the essay. Certain aspects only touched upon here, particularly the analysis of U.S. interests and policies in Southeast Asia and the discussion of the socio-political structure of South Vietnam, deserve far deeper treatment. But since the main purpose is to contribute to policy formulation during the negotiations, time is of the essence and the discussion of these and other similar topics has been held to the strict minimum necessary for clarifying allied objectives and examining a strategy for "fighting and negotiating."

Mr. Vu Van Thai represented the Republic of Vietnam as Ambassador to the United States from late 1965 to early 1967, at which time he resumed a career on the United Nations staff, dealing with economic development. From 1950 to 1954, he was a non-communist member of the Central Committee of France of the Lien Viet (earlier, and more commonly, known as the Viet Minh). After the Geneva negotiations of 1954 (which he attended), he joined the Diem government in Saigon and became Director of Budget and Foreign Aid until he submitted his resignation in October 1960 (not accepted till late in 1961, when he joined the United Nations). He has been a part-time consultant to The RAND Corporation since 1967, and is principally occupied at present as consultant to the Administrator of the UN Development Program.

SUMMARY

This paper argues that there are promising opportunities for strengthening the non-communist structure of South Vietnam, and for inducing and exploiting internal conflicts among communist factions, through a strategy of fighting and negotiating. United States policy can be designed to stimulate favorable political development and encourage a settlement stressing coexistence between communists and non-communists. It is recognized that such a policy implies a risk that the communists might take over peacefully if the non-communists fail to strengthen themselves; but in the long run this risk inheres in any feasible policy. A risk taken now for political development, while American military pressure is at its peak, would be far less than a risk postponed to a time when American strength had been reduced to a token force.

In the long term, if one admits that the United States cannot stay in Vietnam forever and that the communist regime in North Vietnam cannot be destroyed, there are only two alternatives: to withdraw, or to build up the socio-economic structure of South Vietnam against any further communist subversion. From this point of view, even a communist "fade-out" or a truce must be considered as tactical and incidental. So long as the non-communists in South Vietnam remain politically weak, the communists will be motivated to maintain a certain level of subversive activities, lying low when our military pressure is high, raising theirs when we reduce ours.

Perhaps for the first time since America's entry into the Vietnamese war, promising trends have developed toward broadening the Saigon government. It was not coincidental that these directly followed President Johnson's decision to reduce the bombing and to move to the negotiating table.

Observing past events, one is led to feel that coalescence of opinion among the population is possible and could be relatively rapid. Take, for example, the momentum of the Buddhist and student movements

in 1963, or the popular acceptance of the Diem regime after the battle against the Binh Xuyen in Saigon in April-May 1955.

Concerning the emergence of enlightened leadership, further broadening of the Huong Cabinet and, more importantly, moderation of the Saigon Government to allow political personalities to take a stand on issues of war and peace and social justice might bring new leaders into the forefront -- leaders reflecting popular aspirations for peace, social justice, and a regime neither ruthless nor corrupt.

In South Vietnam the prospect of a forthcoming settlement is already beginning to shift the priorities of interest of the Saigon establishment. As the conviction fades that the Americans will carry forever the burden of the struggle against communism, the military regime may for the first time grant greater priority to concern for national survival and less to concern for control of power and conservation of the privileges of the establishment. Replacement of the colorless and obedient cabinet of Nguyen Van Loc by the far more respectable cabinet of Tran Van Huong is a first important step toward broadening the base of support of the government.

One must realize that, because of historical circumstances, anti-communism in Vietnam is closely associated with the conservation of acquired privileges. Power and social pre-eminence in the government, in the army, and in business belong exclusively to one group of people. They are persons who, during the fight for independence, chose to contribute to the perpetuation of French rule, or at least to French presence, as a fact of life in order to obtain privileged treatment -- in either case cutting themselves off from the mainstream of Vietnamese aspirations. There is now close correlation between a hard line on communism and the preservation of established privileges. Only fear for their own survival might force the present establishment to relinquish power to more moderate groups not hampered by vested interests in undertaking social reforms -- reforms that would make the government more popular with the population. Such leadership would be in a position to seek a coalescence of major non-communist

factions in support of a broad-based government, dropping the usual tactics of "divide and rule."

Three main aspirations have a strong appeal for the majority of the population:

- o The desire for peace.
- o The desire for social justice.
- o The desire for a postwar regime that is neither ruthless like the communists (or to a lesser degree the Diem regime) nor arrogant and corrupt like recent ones in Saigon.

In fact, the key to a compromise settlement lies in the ability to win over to active support of the GVN a sizable segment of Vietnamese moderate opinion, during the period of negotiations.

In particular, inclusion in the base of support of the government of non-aligned opinion that recognizes the need for deterring the communists from aggression and the danger of dominant Chinese influence over Vietnam would greatly enhance the government's ability to mobilize the nationalistic fervor of the Vietnamese people. Thus the national identity of Vietnam would be preserved while decreasing tensions.

The beginning of negotiations introduces an element of fluidity into a political context otherwise frozen by a stalemated war. Factors can be brought into play to widen the range of interests of the different parties involved and to influence their priority.

Essentially none of the objectives described in this Memorandum can be attained from the communists by compromise, given communist hopes fostered by the present military and political situation in Vietnam. On the GVN side, hopes for achieving a lasting settlement must rest on the chances of significant improvement in either the military or the political sphere, or both. Of the two, political improvement is at the same time more attainable and more fundamental and critical. Thus, it is essential, if we are to achieve a settlement that preserves non-communist interests, that appropriate political development take place in South Vietnam during the fighting and negotiating. Indeed, as we

have seen since April 1968, the fighting-and-negotiating process is more favorable to such development than were past phases of purely military, and increasingly U.S., effort. This is not to say, of course, that it is highly likely that the desired evolution of the GVN will be achieved -- yet it is perfectly feasible, and most of the discussion reflects that premise.

In addition, decisions by the communists themselves have already generated potentially exploitable time-pressures to achieve a settlement.

Within the Communist Party of Vietnam, the successive decisions to launch the Tet offensive (interpreted as the first step of the "general uprising") and to begin fighting and negotiating represent an important departure from their traditional cautions. Rarely have the communists made decisions that squeezed them or cut their ability to stretch out actions over time. But now, in fact, they have narrowed their freedom of decision in this regard. Having based their propaganda and indoctrination literature for so long on the role of the general uprising, and of fighting and negotiating, in the final phase of the conflict (the relation between the two concepts being left ambiguous), the war must now be concluded by successive waves of general offensive (military, political, or both), or the negotiations must come to a favorable conclusion. One can reasonably expect, if neither negotiations nor successive military offensives bring substantial results soon, that tensions between the advocates of a protracted war and those who pushed for the Tet offensive and for fighting while negotiating will be exacerbated further. And since avoidance of factionalism is a primary concern of communist parties, this might be an important factor in inducing the communists to a settlement.

Within the communist world, negotiations and the prospect of a settlement in Vietnam might bring about divergent interests. Russian and Chinese interests, for example, could become less compatible. Distrust and a cooling off of relationships between the DRV and Communist China are also likely.

A very hard line or a very soft line in our negotiating position would encourage unity in the communist camp. A flexible position, bringing into play the conflicting interests of adverse parties, is bound to foster differences of opinion among Hanoi's leaders. Increasing tensions between the Chinese and the Russians would force Hanoi into difficult options likely to generate conflicting views among the Vietnamese communist leadership.

Whatever the degree of control of Hanoi over the NLF, suspicion and concern about its progressive loss will be present in the minds of the Lao Dong party leaders during the negotiations. As for the NLF, although its basic fidelity to Hanoi cannot be questioned, it would probably favor a settlement that would ensure for itself a greater degree of autonomy. This feeling is likely to grow as Hanoi's suspicions and desire to preserve control become more obvious during the negotiations.

The issue of unification is likely to polarize points of view between the DRV and the NLF. A long and flexible process of unification, through North-South discussions concerning progressive confederation, would probably appeal more strongly to the NLF than to the DRV, assuming that the NLF does not run the risk of being crushed in the South and that it has a fair expectation of playing a significant political role there. This point highlights the importance of designing clauses in the settlement that will tend to preserve the rights of political minorities and protect them against persecution. Provided that a compromise settlement does not predetermine the dominance of one faction or another, both communists and non-communists will feel the need for such a guarantee for their own security.

Thus, many factors are likely to bring about internal divergencies of opinion and interest on the communist side during the negotiations. If our own internal strength (on the allied side) is not weakened with time, we have an interest in prolonging the negotiations.

Without a softening of the position of the Saigon government toward the NLF, there is little chance of splitting the DRV and the NLF, and the prospect of a compromise settlement will remain dim.

As uncertainty about its future relationship with China grows, Hanoi may diversify its trade and economic relationships in other areas. Thus, Hanoi may have a growing interest in North-South trade and economic cooperation, although the DRV must still be concerned about preserving its options for mending relationships with China in the aftermath of a settlement.

The factors of change outlined above show that a compromise settlement should not be conceived as imposing static limits leading to a frozen position, but rather as creating a flexible frame adaptable to the political environment in Asia after the war. Such a settlement would have to combine partial containment of incompatible interests of the adverse parties with a sorting out of overlapping interests. Basically, this means accepting some communist participation in South Vietnamese political life, or even (less preferably) in South Vietnamese governmental affairs, against communist concessions that would:

- o Encourage greater independence of the NLF from Hanoi, by making the participation of the NLF in the political life of South Vietnam dependent on the acceptance of certain concessions. These would be designed to increase the likelihood that the political structure of South Vietnam would be basically democratic and different from the political structure in North Vietnam.
- o Encourage North Vietnam to maintain an independent line from China by (1) making North-South relations a clause of the settlement and (2) reinforcing this clause by introducing a plan for North-South cooperation in reconstruction.

A list of built-in safeguards to these ends might include:

- o A lengthy schedule for U.S. troop withdrawal.
- o The preservation of a significant non-communist army.
- o Constitutional and international guarantees against the repression of minority groups.

- o The right of free travel abroad for South Vietnamese citizens.
- o The guarantee of a South Vietnam open to all foreign influences and assistance.
- o Provisions for postwar reconstruction.
- o Provisions for economic cooperation with other Southeast Asian countries.
- o A flexible and lengthy process of reunification.
- o Involving the USSR in an active role in peacekeeping in Vietnam in the postwar period.

To bring a settlement of this type into being, our overall strategy during the period of fighting and negotiating should have as its objectives:

- o To broaden the range of interests of the adverse parties.
- o To change the political context of the communist world and of Southeast Asia, permitting diversification and divergence of interest among the various communist parties. Also, to increase the probability of peaceful coexistence between North Vietnam and its non-communist neighbor, on the one hand, and between non-communists and communists in Vietnam, on the other.
- o To discourage communist expectations of complete control of South Vietnam, while creating incentives for coexistence and cooperation.
- o To preserve the unity of the allied cause during the negotiations, regarding both its internal opinions and relationships between allies. Particularly important in this respect is the objective of strengthening South Vietnam through negotiations.

- o To stimulate favorable political developments in South Vietnam. The United States would have to make clear its willingness to write-off Vietnam if it proves to be a meaningless cause, as well as its continued support if there is progress toward a government able to withstand political competition from the communists.

To improve our chances for bringing about the conditions of an optimal settlement, we must accept a time perspective long enough for the desired effects. Fighting and negotiating should be viewed as a contest of political attrition between developing "contradictions" in the communist camp and in ours. Our strategy should be designed to strengthen our ability to sustain a reasonably lengthy process of negotiations by strengthening points susceptible to communist erosion. The most essential factors are the unity of opinion in the United States, the morale of the South Vietnamese army, and the political coalescence of the South Vietnamese non-communists around a moderate South Vietnamese government.

As for the chances of a peaceful aftermath, an agreement covering a wide range of diversified interests would improve the chances of implementation by presenting the contending parties with alternative policies, thus allowing them to respect the agreement without frustrating vital interests. One must nevertheless admit that, in a compromise settlement of this nature, there is a distinct possibility for a final communist take-over of South Vietnam. But if this were to happen under the proposed conditions, it would happen gradually, over a period of time, without major violence or violation of the agreement. The loss of South Vietnam under these circumstances would have minimal impact on the evolution of Southeast Asia. The inevitable loss of morale might be rationalized by the conviction that U.S. commitments have limits and that the Vietnamese non-communists have had their chances; this may well stimulate Southeast Asian leaders to improve the political appeal and efficiency of their regime. Thus, the result might be, over time, a stronger Southeast Asia than the present one. Of course the countries now strongly aligned with the

United States might evolve toward a more independent stand; but this might ease a U.S. shift of policies in the postwar period and favor the launching of Southeast Asian cooperation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

We are now entering a new phase of confrontation with the communists. Most likely it will be a phase of fighting and negotiating. Negotiations can be expected to be long and arduous. Meanwhile, the fighting will go on, probably until a cease-fire or truce has been agreed to.

Under these conditions, to approach negotiations simply as a tactical process of bargaining to reach a compromise agreement, using the leverage of our "cards" to obtain concessions from the adversary, might be short-sighted. As the process of negotiations unfolds over a relatively lengthy period, the political context in which the conflict is taking place will change. This is the more likely to be so since the decision to move to the conference table might induce the evolution of many political factors frozen till now by the prospect of uncompromising confrontation. By conceiving the Paris talks outside the context of an overall strategy to achieve stable long-term political goals, we might fail to influence the evolution of the broad political context in a favorable direction. Thus we might fail to create the conditions for a stable and peaceful aftermath.

In their doctrinal approach, the communists conceive of negotiations as a new dimension in their struggle for the control (and the communization) of South Vietnam, and, more broadly, as signifying a step toward the expansion of their influence in Southeast Asia and other developing countries. In their expressed view, they do not have as a primary purpose arriving at a settlement. Fighting and negotiating have always been represented as a stratagem to relieve pressure on their military effort while they devise new means of accentuating allied "contradictions" (that is, developing conflicting trends on our side). In brief, this is a strategy for broadening their means of struggle, particularly with regard to political action, while limiting the range of our means of counteraction. The settlement is viewed as the final step in consolidating the results obtained during the negotiating phase of the struggle.

I do not feel that the communists are entering into this phase in the condition described by their doctrine as the final step toward victory. But whatever their appraisal of the situation and whatever the considerations that led them to depart from doctrine, one can be sure that they will try to exploit the negotiating posture to the maximum to achieve their political goals and relieve their own limitations. Historically and stylistically, the Vietnamese are among the most skillful of communist parties in the pragmatic use of tactics and the choice of strategies. Thus their strategic approach and even to a certain measure their objectives for the phase of fighting and negotiating might depend to a significant degree upon the efficiency of our own counterstrategy.

An unwise "bargaining approach" on our part might result in the progressive erosion of the allied position through communist military, political, psychological, and propaganda moves. The communists might then finally obtain a settlement that would enable them to launch another phase of communist expansion with respect, at once, to their Vietnamese goals, their Southeast Asian goals, and their worldwide goals.

The outcome of the phase of fighting and negotiating might depend in large part on whether our objectives and the tactical use of our military, economic, diplomatic, and political means are realistically conceived for progressive strengthening as the process of fighting and negotiating unfolds and time passes. It will be of particular importance to examine whether our objectives through this phase are closely adapted to the full potential as well as the limitations of a fighting-and-negotiating posture. This will necessitate clarifying what we consider to be a favorable outcome both for the United States and for free Vietnam. Even if such a concept could be defined for the United States in terms of her long-range interests, for free Vietnam it is very hard to decide which combination of aims represents the true interest of a non-communist Vietnamese nation. Yet we cannot ignore these questions, for we can be sure that communist efforts during the phase of fighting and negotiating will focus on narrowing the base of support of the Saigon government, while broadening differences between

the Saigon government and the United States and increasing the gap between the American negotiating position and the mainstream of Vietnamese popular aspirations.

If a military victory for either side is to be ruled out there, the phase of fighting and negotiating has, by necessity, limited objectives. For the communists these are clearly to bring about a situation favorable to a communist takeover of South Vietnam during the following phase, while preparing the way for further communist action in Southeast Asia.

To counteract the communist strategy, we must think of fighting and negotiating as an integrated approach, where our military, economic, and political actions are conceived and articulated together to achieve an important step toward the realization of our long-term broad objectives. The notion is to take full opportunity of changing conditions created by the introduction of new dimensions of negotiation into the Vietnam conflict to induce the desired process of evolution of the communist side and of our own. The immediate goal will be to bring about conditions favorable to a compromise settlement designed to prepare the climate for a peaceful rapprochement of the two Vietnams, and more broadly to promote greater political stability in Southeast Asia in the postwar period.

This implies examining all ways and means by which we could take advantage of a negotiating posture to influence:

- First, the evolution of the communist world toward a less aggressive stand in Vietnam and, more broadly, in Southeast Asia.
- Second, the development of favorable trends to strengthen the non-communist socio-political structure of South Vietnam and enable it to withstand peaceful competition with the communists.
- Third, the establishment of a de-escalated political climate, necessary to make possible a real compromise settlement, thus enhancing the chances of its implementation and of a stable aftermath. The talks in Paris will thus not be separated from the conduct of the war and of policy in Vietnam. All of these will become components of an

overall strategy of negotiations designed to end the phase of limited war and prepare the way for a global, and more specifically a Southeast Asian, policy toward communism.

The present study aims at identifying the main issues and factors of such a strategy of negotiations, and at analyzing their possible impact in a changing political context.

Much of the discussion that follows may appear naively optimistic unless a particular constraint is appreciated clearly at the outset. Essentially none of the objectives described in this study can be attained from the communists by compromise, given communist hopes and aims fostered by the present military and political situation in Vietnam. Hopes on the GVN side to achieve a settlement -- short of a near-term, unilateral, loss-cutting U.S. withdrawal -- must rest on the chances of significant improvement in either the military or the political sphere, or both. Of the two, I believe that political improvement is at the same time more attainable and more fundamental and critical. Thus, it is essential, if we are to achieve a settlement which preserves non-communist interests, that appropriate political development take place in South Vietnam during the process of fighting and negotiating. Indeed, as we have seen in the past year, this process is (I would argue) more favorable to such development than were past phases of purely military, and increasingly U.S., effort. This is not to say, of course, that it is highly likely that the desired improvement will be achieved, even if (as a first step) this is recognized as a crucial desideratum. Yet I believe that it is perfectly feasible -- and most of the discussion reflects that premise.

II. THE CHANCES OF A SETTLEMENT -- THE SPECTRUM OF
INTERESTS OF THE ADVERSE PARTIES

A comprehensive analysis of the interests of the principal antagonists, of the degree of compatibility between the different interests of each, and of the factors that will influence the relative priority of any one set of interests is essential for the formulation of a dynamic counterstrategy. An understanding of these interests is important not only because communist efforts will concentrate on broadening what they consider to be "contradictions" (that is, conflicting interests on our side), but also because to appraise the chances of inducing a less aggressive strategy from the communist side we need a full understanding of their diverse interests and of the degree of compatibility between them in alternative international and Vietnamese political contexts. Finally, it is only in the degree to which the agreements respect the true deep interests of the non-communist Vietnamese and provide for conditions favorable to their further development in the postwar period that there is a chance of avoiding communization of the whole of Vietnam in the long run.

U.S. INTERESTS AND FLEXIBILITY OF AIMS

Whatever the diversity of opinion on the U.S. commitment in Vietnam, there is general agreement that South Vietnam by itself holds little direct interest for the United States; it is important only in the broader context of Southeast Asia. In turn, the long-range U.S. interest in Southeast Asia is related to its worldwide policy toward communism and communist countries, particularly Russia and China. Despite the Sino-Soviet rift and the trend toward polycentrism in the communist world, U.S. Asian policy, because of the legacy of past commitments and of the chain of events (particularly in Vietnam), has not evolved significantly from the basic concept of the period of the Cold War, when communism was monolithic and the world bipolarized.

A settlement in Vietnam could represent for the United States an important opening for clearing past legacies and introducing new policy

approaches toward Southeast Asia in the perspective of a changing strategy toward a diversified communist world. Nevertheless, one should not conceive of an abrupt and dramatic turn in American policy. Realistically, there will be no discernible discontinuity from "during" to "after" Vietnam. Rather, the process of negotiation and the implementation of successive phases of a settlement will create a changing climate with opportunities for progressive change of emphasis and gradual introduction of new elements of greater flexibility into existing policies.

Although there are many variations, the alternatives for American policy are roughly three:

1. The continuation of a policy of rigid containment, which implies the maintenance of a military presence complemented by economic aid to non-communist countries to strengthen their capacity to resist communist subversion.

2. A neo-isolationist policy. Basically, this means a progressive disengagement from Southeast Asia coupled with a policy that will place the United States in a position of arbitrator in the competition between Russia and China.

3. A policy of progressive shifting from containment to a flexible combination of containment, deterrence, cooperation, and coexistence -- coupled with a policy of encouraging diversification and interests and the evolution of communism towards a polycentric structure.

Applied specifically to a settlement in Vietnam, one can then see three types of settlements:

1. A return to the status quo: two Vietnams, one communist and one anticommunist, mutually antagonistic. This type of solution is very unlikely now, since it could be achieved only through military pressure sufficient to force the communists to "fade out" of South Vietnam. But even if, unexpectedly, the present start toward negotiation failed and we went on to achieve such a fade-out, the following consequences could be foreseen in the long run.

North Vietnam might return to a close relationship with China, reversing the trend towards polycentrism that was beginning to emerge in the Asian communist movement since 1965. This trend was shown by declarations of independence from the Chinese line by the North Korean and the Japanese Communist Parties in the wake of Chinese rejection of unity of action in support of North Vietnam. Meanwhile, the Vietnamese communists were evolving toward a doctrinal line increasingly independent of Chinese doctrine, particularly regarding wars of liberation.

In my view, Chinese and North Vietnamese interests would again become parallel in this case, for the following reasons. The Vietnamese communist would then be fighting for the very survival of their regime in the North. Their present leadership has been so committed to the aim of "liberation of the South," and the sacrifices by their followers both in North and South have been so great, that complete failure of this venture would shake the government and party structure of the DRV to its foundations. Under these circumstances, the Party cannot but be concerned about preserving its control over the population of the North. Whatever the degree of divergence of their other interests, the Vietnamese and Chinese communists will feel bound together by the immediate threat of an American "victory" in the South.

Apart from future military successes that might cause the Viet Cong to fade out, the fact remains that the Vietnamese communists fighting alone and only with aid from the communist world, have succeeded in stalemating American counterefforts for a number of years. They have managed to bring internal dissensions in the United States to the point where the single-minded pursuit of the war has had to be abandoned and negotiations started to avoid internal conflicts. Whatever the final outcome, the trauma of "never being again engaged in another Vietnam" is not likely to disappear easily from American opinion.

Taking all these considerations together, the most likely conclusion to be drawn by the communists is that, if an isolated effort in a limited area, South Vietnam, can almost succeed, a more extended attack, obliging American forces and resources to stretch out over as

many countries as possible, would make the margin for ultimate victory. After all, the idea of "more of the same" need not be restricted to our own side in the breaking of stalemates. And on the communist side, following a provisional setback, an extended effort carefully prepared in time and launched in as many places of Southeast Asia as possible makes more sense than our perseverance in intensifying the use of means that have clearly diminishing returns. Also, in case of serious setback, the communists cannot survive without very strict adherence to their doctrinal line. In this case, emphasis on international communist solidarity and the liberation of Vietnam as part of the broader struggle in Southeast Asia is the only way to maintain hope and galvanize the energies of their cadres.

The Chinese cannot but encourage these Vietnamese trends, which both bring them closer to the Chinese doctrinal line and serve the purpose of protecting their security.

As for the Russians, they cannot let the North Vietnamese down without losing the confidence of all communist parties.

Thus the final result of forcing the communists to fade out from South Vietnam would be a greater degree of unity in the communist camp. This unity is most likely to be directed toward preparing and launching simultaneous wars of liberation in several Southeast Asian countries, with the Vietnamese playing the spearheading and risk-taking role and China acting as the main controlling force.

An alternative course of events might well be the collapse of the communist regime in North Vietnam as a result of the admission of defeat implied in a fade-out. In this case, considerable turmoil could be expected in the territory of the DRV, to which neither the Chinese nor the GVN (with the ARVN) could be passive, thus creating a possibly serious international crisis. The United States might even find itself in a situation of uncontrollable clash with Chinese vital interests.

Besides, a fade-out might not bring the favorable political evolution that many Americans might expect in South Vietnam. As this

study will argue in its later part, an analysis of the power structure of the GVN and the motivations of different layers of the non-communist population indicates that the military would tend to recover whatever part of authority they might have relinquished to the civilians. Such a regime would remain poorly motivated and weak for a long time. A recurrence of communist subversion could be deterred only if the United States were to continue to maintain a strong military presence. An important military build-up would hamper the process of economic reconstruction and development, and thus perpetuate the weakness of the Saigon regime.

2. A settlement on communist terms, leading to a progressive communist take-over of South Vietnam. This will happen if, during the process of negotiations, the political context has not changed -- that is, if:

- o The divergence of interests inside the communist world fails to materialize.

- o Political developments in South Vietnam do not change the present power structure.

- o The negotiations result in the establishment of a coalition government, or in elections with Communist Party participation, without a set of built-in clauses designed both to create interest in co-existence between communists and non-communists and to provide effective safeguards against the persecution of political or other minorities. These topics will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

A settlement on these terms might have the following consequence. The Vietnamese communists would have immense prestige internationally, but enormous problems of reconstruction at home. Most likely, the reconstruction process in the North and South and the establishment of communist rule in South Vietnam would receive priority; but the Vietnamese communists would attempt to play an important role in South-east Asia, at least where foreign activities would not strain the resources required for the reconstruction of the country. It is

reasonable to expect more political than military action from the Vietnamese communists after a settlement.

In Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand they might be expected to export political and some military cadres to strengthen the local communist infrastructure, rather than to attempt direct military intervention. (Nevertheless, North Vietnamese troops presently in Laos will perhaps not be withdrawn.) One might also expect sizable shipments of surplus arms, if the present equipment of ARVN falls under communist control as a result of the settlement.

There might be some competition between China and North Vietnam over their relative role in Southeast Asia; but this is not likely to go very far, since for the next decade or so external assistance (except to Laos and Cambodia) will receive only second priority among North Vietnamese policy objectives.

China would emerge in the immediate aftermath with a triumphant doctrine of war of liberation, which would put her in a favorable position to play a leading role in the expansion of communist subversion in Southeast Asia. Also an intensification of the competition between China and Russia for the control of communist movements in developing countries could reasonably be expected.

The most serious consequence for the United States might stem from political developments in the free countries of Southeast Asia. Everywhere governments might look for some form of soft accommodation with China and be more susceptible to Chinese pressure. Pro-Western nationalist movements would be discredited, both because alignment with the United States had been proven ineffective and because they would be identified with those of the losing pro-Western nationalist regime in China and in Vietnam. More generally, non-communist movements to achieve national goals would lose credibility, while communism will appear as the champion of nationalism and as the most efficient system for fulfilling national popular aspirations.

In view of these consequences, U.S. options in Southeast Asia would be narrowed to two extreme policies: (1) either to harden the

present line and substantially increase the U.S. military presence and commitment in Southeast Asia, in an attempt to reestablish the credibility of U.S. determination to remain in the area (a policy of more inflexible containment) or (2) forced by changes in attitudes among Southeast Asian governments, to begin a progressive disengagement from the area.

United States withdrawal from Southeast Asia might result in a wild struggle of influence between China and Russia. This could place the United States in the position of arbitrator. Also, the struggle could oblige both Russia and China to take a strong anti-Western stand. The consequences of this competition for world peace are unpredictable but ominous.

In addition, political reactions in the United States to a Vietnamese settlement tantamount to withdrawal are likely to exacerbate rather than heal political divisions. The already limited options referred to above might be narrowed again by the very division of U.S. internal opinion. The United States might be driven into a neo-isolationist posture by the failure -- because of internal disunity -- to act decisively following a settlement in Vietnam.

3. A compromise settlement along two alternative lines of U.S. interests.

One line is to pursue a limited objective -- to frustrate enough communist ambitions to preserve the confidence of other Southeast Asian countries. In this case the strategy of negotiation would be focused on improving the Western bargaining position through a strengthened military posture and internal political environment. Such a compromise settlement is difficult to conceive, but it might be nothing more than an extended truce.

The alternative line is to extend the range of U.S. interests, creating an overlapping of common or parallel interests between the United States and South Vietnam, on the one side, and each of the separate communist parties, on the other, while simultaneously playing up divergencies of interest among the communist parties. Such a set of wide interests would comprise:

o The acceptance of a certain degree of communist participation in South Vietnamese political life or even governmental affairs, against communist concessions on clauses guaranteeing the maintenance of diversity of trade and other relationships between South Vietnam and the rest of the world.

o Creating conditions for greater independence of the NLF from Hanoi by making its participation in the political life of South Vietnam dependent on the acceptance of concessions ensuring that the political structure of South Vietnam would remain basically democratic and different from that in North Vietnam.

o Encouraging North Vietnam to maintain an independent line from China by making North-South relations a clause of the settlement, and reinforcing this clause by introducing a plan for North-South cooperation in reconstruction.

o Making reunification a flexible process of progressive confederation through North-South negotiations over a long period of time.

o Involving the USSR in an active role of peace-keeping in Vietnam in the postwar period.

Past experiences -- particularly the Laotian crisis of 1962-1963, the Sino-Indian conflict, and the Indo-Pakistan conflicts -- indicate that, as far as Southeast Asia is concerned, Russian influence has a stabilizing effect. Since the beginning of the Sino-Soviet rift, Vietnam is the only place where the Russians have been squeezed into an uneasy parallelism with Communist China. Relative to continental China, Southeast Asia is located just on the other side of the Sino-Soviet border -- hence its importance to any Russian policy of deterring China from an aggressive policy.

I do not mean here that the Russians could be expected to adopt a policy of cooperation or parallelism with the United States, but only that Russian influence in Vietnam would be beneficial, for

two main reasons. First, it would tend to accentuate the diversification of interests of the communist world as a whole in Southeast Asia, thus emasculating (to a certain degree) its aggressiveness. Second, in time of acute tensions, one might expect parallel action from the United States and the USSR to check any dangerous escalation. This could be expected even if there is a temporary patch-up in the Sino-Soviet rift, because it is in these circumstances that vital Sino-Soviet interests clash.

FACTORS AFFECTING VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST INTERESTS AND FLEXIBILITY

The pressure of past mistakes. Because of the Geneva agreements, which ended in the present war, and of the modus vivendi signed with France in 1946, which ended in the long and bloody eight-year war against the French, the communist leadership will have great difficulty softening their four conditions for a settlement. Thus, one must expect a hard, stubborn negotiating line for a long time. But when sufficient time has elapsed and the communists feel they have an interest in concluding the negotiations, they will merely maintain the form of their four points but soften their interpretation. In fact, the four conditions as they have been enunciated leave ample room for maneuver. There is also the ambiguity introduced by two sets of conditions: the four points of the DRV and the five points of the NLF. This gives them the added flexibility of being able to play up one set or the other.

Nevertheless, because of the collective responsibility of the present leadership (except for Le Duan) in signing the Geneva Agreements, they cannot be expected to take the responsibility of an agreement that does not provide substantial gains. Also, remembering Geneva, where they were induced to accept the agreement by the Russians and the Chinese, they will be careful in listening to external communist advice, and will make certain to appear as clear masters of their own game. The suspicion of falling into a U.S.-USSR deal will be ever present in their minds.

The homogeneity and the solidarity of communist leadership. The prospect of the death of Ho Chi Minh will influence the behavior of the communist leaders. Uncertainty about the evolution of the present structure of leadership once Ho Chi Minh disappears from the scene will either make the leaders cautious in taking a stand on a matter so important for the future of their party as a settlement of the war, or tend to crystallize the factions contending for leadership.

One must also observe that the decision to enter negotiations became evident after the 1968 Tet offensive. The change of strategy implied by this double move represented an important decision for the communist leadership. In fact, they narrowed their freedom of decision with regard to the time perspective. The Tet offensive must have been understood by all communist cadres either as the general uprising or as its first phase. Now, successive waves of general offensive must follow or the negotiations must come to a favorable conclusion. Because of the inconclusiveness of the Tet offensive (whatever results were achieved, they were not decisive), tensions between the leaders who pleaded for the new strategy and their opponents must be mounting, because neither side can prove the other wrong. These differences must be further polarized by the decision to move to the negotiating table.

To appreciate the full meaning of these two successive actions, one must remember that one characteristic of the Vietnamese communists is their primary concern about keeping time on their side. Rarely in their history have they made decisions that risked cutting their ability to stretch actions over a long period of time. This is one of Ho Chi Minh's deepest imprints on the communist party of Vietnam.

If negotiations and successive military offensives do not bring substantial results in a relatively short period of time, tensions between the advocates of a protracted war and advocates of the Tet offensive and the fighting-and-negotiating phase of the war will be exacerbated further. It is, then, important for us to observe communist strategy during the early period of negotiations for signs of impatience

for progress in the negotiations; impatience would indicate factional dispute.

Avoidance of factionalization has always been a primary concern of communist parties. This unanimity-mindedness might constitute an important factor in inducing the communists to a settlement. We should study how to induce and encourage the development of these trends. A very hard negotiating position as well as a very soft one will encourage unity in the communist camp. A flexible position bringing into play a broad range of conflicting interests of the adverse party is bound to foster differences of opinion among Hanoi's leaders.

Increasing tensions between Hanoi and China and increasing differences between the Chinese and the Russians will force Hanoi into difficult options that could generate conflicting points of view in the Vietnamese communist leadership. Any internal divergence of opinion and interest on the communist side is likely to be evidenced during the process of negotiation. Thus, assuming that our own internal strength (on the allied side) is not weakened with time, we have an interest in stretching the negotiations over a relatively long period of time.

Interests in the DRV and of the NLF. Whatever the degree of control of Hanoi over the NLF, suspicion and concern about progressive loss of this control and growing autonomy of the NLF will be present in the minds of the Lao Dong party leaders during the negotiations.

As for the NLF, although its basic fidelity to Hanoi cannot be questioned, there will be some inclination toward a settlement that would ensure a greater degree of autonomy vis-à-vis Hanoi. This inclination is likely to increase as Hanoi's suspicions and desire to preserve control become more obvious during the negotiations.

The issue of unification is liable to polarize differences in point of view between the DRV and the NLF. Most likely, a long and flexible process of unification through North-South discussions concerning progressive confederation would be more appealing to the NLF

than to the DRV, provided that the NLF members feel they run no risk of being crushed in the South and have a fair expectation of playing a significant political role in South Vietnam.

This point highlights the importance of designing clauses guaranteeing the rights of political minorities and protecting them against persecution. Both communists and non-communists will feel the need of such a clause for their own security, in the context of a true compromise settlement. It is in fact in the very nature of a stable compromise to preserve for each contending party a fair chance of full development within the frame of law and the dispositions of the agreement, while protecting minorities from coercive pressure under every alternative postwar political evolution.

It is in my view important to introduce this principle at the earliest stage of negotiations in order to create a climate of political de-escalation between communists and non-communists in South Vietnam. Also, without a softening of the position of the Saigon government toward the NLF, there is little chance of inducing divergencies of interest between the DRV and the NLF. The prospect of a compromise settlement will remain very dim.

We cannot accept NLF participation in the negotiations on communist terms, but we have no interest either in regarding the NLF as only a component of the DRV delegation. A skillful compromise has to be conceived that would grant the NLF separate status from Hanoi, while not implying by this move any recognition of its future role in South Vietnam -- which will remain open to negotiation.

Hanoi's relationship with Communist China and the evolution of North Vietnamese interests during negotiations. There are clear indications that Hanoi has been taking an increasingly independent line from China since 1965. This is not merely a tactical move determined by the need for increasing aid from Russia; there has been a real doctrinal distancing between Hanoi and Peking. On the vital issue of agrarian structure, for example, although both parties started with the same model of agrarian reform (the Chinese model), the Chinese

have moved toward the "commune" concept and the North Vietnamese toward a flexible "cooperative farm" concept.¹

With respect to guerrilla warfare and wars of liberation, Hanoi has moved away conceptually from the Chinese on the phases of guerrilla warfare and the role of the cities and the countryside (in this respect the Tet offensive might be expected to have stirred renewed Chinese criticisms). Hanoi is giving far more emphasis than Peking to the workers' role in spearheading communization. More important, Hanoi is stressing its own "creativity" in this respect, an implicit claim that there are indigenous ways to socialism. Although it has skillfully avoided entering into bitter ideological disputes with China because of the war, Hanoi has made its rejection of the "cultural revolution" and of the "cult of personality" very clear in an unequivocal and strong article in Hoc Tap. Hoping to stimulate nationalist fervor, Hanoi emphasizes its originality in achieving a synthesis between the traditional Vietnamese culture and the Marxist culture, while the Chinese attempt to destroy their past values through the cultural revolution.

Even the most dogmatically "pro-Chinese" leaders in Hanoi, such as Truong Chinh and Nguyen Chi Thanh (before his death), have stressed the independence of Hanoi's own thinking.²

In the minds of leaders both in Hanoi and in Peking the growing doctrinal gap has far more serious meaning than differences on tactics or policies.

If Hanoi now decides to move toward a phase of negotiations, even if only for purely tactical reasons, it must have weighed and accepted the risk of cooling its relationship with China. Time and again China has reaffirmed her opposition to any form of compromise; in fact, her

¹ See Rene Dumont, "Agricultural Problems in North Vietnam, France, Asia," Asia (Autumn), No. 183.

² John C. Donnell and Melvin Gurtov, North Vietnam: Left of Moscow, Right of Peking, The RAND Corporation, P-3794, February 1968. Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle: Moscow, Peking, Hanoi (New York: Pegasus, 1967).

public stand has so frozen her position that world opinion and that of the various communist parties would interpret any settlement as a clear success for Russian influence and a serious setback for Chinese influence.

One might expect greater Chinese suspicion toward North Vietnam as negotiations progress, since in all likelihood China will not accept direct participation in any international conference related to a settlement of the Vietnamese conflict (both because of her opposition to a negotiated settlement and because of the rift with Russia). The Chinese might even attempt to put pressure on North Vietnam as negotiations are making progress. It seems unlikely that these pressures would be of a military character, unless China feels at some stage that Hanoi is joining an incipient United States-Soviet alliance. Most likely, Chinese advice to the DRV against concluding any agreement will become less and less friendly and more and more threatening, perhaps followed by actual implementation of economic sanctions (under the form of progressive or abrupt cuts in Chinese aid and trade).

As uncertainty grows about its future relationships with China, Hanoi would have a growing interest in diversifying her trade and attenuating her economic relationship with China. Thus, Hanoi will have a growing interest in North-South trade and economic cooperation.

Although there are only a few instances where communist regimes would sacrifice political objectives in favor of trade interests (Hong Kong being one of them), I believe that North Vietnam can be counted as one. First, the Vietnamese communists are unusually pragmatic in their policies while remaining radical in their revolutionary purposes. Economic considerations have always affected their past important decisions. They have not -- for instance in 1956-1957 -- hesitated to stop and amend their agrarian reform program when the socio-economic and political results were felt to be detrimental. In 1960-1964, when they were politically and doctrinally aligned with the Chinese, they were careful to maintain trade and aid with Russia and the East European communist countries.

Second and more important, the food deficit problem of North Vietnam will grow with time, and this can be solved only through Sino-North Vietnamese trade or North Vietnamese trade with the South or other Southeast Asian countries. Of course, in case of an agreement frustrating its most vital interests and with South Vietnamese basically hostile, the DRV will not grant priority to trade and economic relationships. But in a compromise settlement that would open the way to the pursuit of a wide range of interests, as well as alternative peaceful strategies toward unification and even possible communist dominance in the South, there is no basic conflict of interest between trade and political objectives. As we shall note later, any settlement conceived along this line presents an inherent risk of final communist take-over of the South through peaceful means if non-communists fail to unite and develop. Nevertheless, even in that case, one might expect that trade relationships with the free countries would have some transforming effects on the Vietnamese communists, as they did in the evolution of the East European countries in the past decade.

Also, in all likelihood the DRV is concerned with preserving options for mending its relationship with China in the aftermath of a settlement. Thus Hanoi might be interested in keeping its status as a "pure" socialist country while using South Vietnam as an outlet to the capitalist world. In other words, Hanoi might be interested in maintaining a free South Vietnam in the manner of China's Hong Kong.

It should be noted that, in their stated positions, Hanoi and the NLF have carefully maintained the option of a free, neutral South Vietnam open to the free world. At the same time they have hinted at the possibility of a long process of reunification.¹

In the final analysis, the evolving relationship between North Vietnam and China is one of the important dynamic factors of the negotiations for facilitating a stable compromise settlement. The

¹ See Jean Lacouture, Vietnam: Between Two Truces (New York: Random House, 1966); Douglas Pike, Viet Cong: The Organization and Techniques of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1966).

chances of political de-escalation between communists and non-communists in South Vietnam will be enhanced by any emerging tension between Hanoi and Peking.

On the other hand, regardless of tensions that might develop between Communist China and the DRV during the process of negotiations, the conclusion of a satisfactory compromise settlement is bound to create bitterness and distrust between the two governments. A skillful U.S. and South Vietnamese policy exploiting this state of affairs immediately after a settlement will have a good chance of inducing North Vietnam to diversify her interests.

North Vietnamese interests in Southeast Asia. North Vietnam is ambitious to play a politically dominant role in the process of revolution in Southeast Asia. But following a satisfactory settlement, it might be induced to develop friendly relations with Southeast Asian governments, particularly in the field of trade and other economic exchanges. These two interests are incompatible with each other (as demonstrated by the Russian experience, by the Chinese experience in Burma and Indonesia, and by the North Vietnamese and Chinese experiences in Cambodia). Their relative priority depends, on the one hand, on North Vietnamese needs for economic reconstruction in the postwar period and, on the other, on the state of its relationship with China. As we have stated, it is likely that North Vietnam would give priority to tasks of reconstruction and would undertake revolutionary activities abroad only to the extent that they do not compete with resources required for reconstruction. In addition, strained relationships between North Vietnam and China would incline North Vietnam to give priority to cementing relationships with neighboring states (both for political reasons and for the purpose of diverting trade from China and toward Southeast Asia). North Vietnam might even be interested in some form of cooperation among Southeast Asian countries, provided that this scheme would not be controlled by the United States and that a form of association can be found which will not foreclose its chances of mending, to a certain degree, its relationship with China.

These considerations stress the importance of creating a climate of progressive political de-escalation during the negotiations, particularly between the Vietnamese communists and non-communists, followed by an agreement providing for North-South economic exchanges and a skillful policy (exploiting fully the inevitable coolness between China and North Vietnam following a settlement) of inducing the DRV to establish ties with the South and with other Southeast Asian countries.

The need for economic assistance in reconstructing the Vietnamese economy. Both the NLF and the DRV will recognize the need for economic assistance in the job of reconstruction. Just as dependence on Russian aid has affected Vietnamese communist policies since 1965, we might also expect that dependence on external assistance for reconstruction will influence Hanoi's and the NLF's decisions during the negotiations. As the negotiations progress, one could expect closer relationships to develop between the DRV and the Russians and other European communist countries (another reason to arouse Chinese wrath). North Vietnamese interest in U.S. aid is not to be ruled out. (Sihanouk's statement that North Vietnam will accept American aid if the war is ended, made during De Gaulle's visit to Cambodia in 1966, was presumably not initiated by Sihanouk on his own.)

North Vietnamese - Russian relations. Because of the North Vietnamese interest in Russian economic support in war and in peace, and the uncertainty of relationships with China during the period of negotiations and its immediate aftermath, the North Vietnamese will have to maintain friendly relations with the Russians, even if this should increase Chinese displeasure or suspicion. Russia's initial policy might be simply to back North Vietnamese positions. But if the Sino-Soviet rift deepens during the negotiations, the Russians will have a growing interest, parallel to that of the United States, to encourage divergencies of point of view and functions between Hanoi and Peking.

It should be observed that when the prospects of a real compromise improve, the fear of appearing to promote divisions of the communist movement while it is under challenge in Vietnam, thus serving U.S. interests, will progressively decline. Thus a negotiated end of the war might be expected to result in a more active and less ambiguous Russian policy in Southeast Asia. The direction of this policy -- either temporary accommodation with China, or increased competition -- might depend in great part upon American world policy -- more specifically its Asian aspect in the immediate postwar period.

In any case and particularly if the Sino-Soviet rift widens, it will be more difficult in peacetime than in wartime for North Vietnam to preserve close ties with both Communist China and the USSR. Further, Russian support cannot be expected to be without ties in the postwar era.

THE INTERESTS OF THE NON-COMMUNISTS OF SOUTH VIETNAM

The South Vietnamese political situation represents the Achilles heel in our negotiating position. One must remark that during the Tet offensive of 1968 the most striking fact was the passivity of the urban population, which indicated clearly its refusal to take sides when faced with a choice between the communists and the Saigon regime. In contrast, they did not have a passive attitude during the previous three years, when tens of thousands and sometimes hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated for one issue or another, despite the use of repressive forces by the Saigon government. The attitude of the crowds during the offensive could also be contrasted with their attitude during the fighting in Saigon at the time of General Duong Van Minh's coup against the Diem regime in November 1963, or General Thi's abortive coup of November 1960. In both instances the sympathy and even the enthusiasm of the population for one side was obvious.

In my view the popular attitude during the Tet offensive is a clear indication that the population in the cities is growing allergic to both the Saigon government and the communist government. The results of the 1967 elections indicate unambiguously the limited appeal of both regimes. In a relatively free balloting, where the communists used the full blast of their propaganda and mobilized coercive means to induce people to abstain from voting, the proportion of abstention (which could not be attributed wholly to communist appeal and coercion) was only about 10 percent. Communist sympathizers, when they did vote, must have voted for Truong Dinh Dzu, whose campaign was (openly or covertly) conceived to appeal to them and to the sentiment of extreme war weariness. Thus Dzu's total of 15 percent of the votes must include some communist votes, in addition to the votes of those who want peace at any price and extreme protesters against the Saigon regime.

Still, in an underdeveloped country where one would normally expect a sizable part of the population to be politically unawakened and to follow official inducement, the Thieu/Ky ticket drew only one-third of the votes, despite the tremendous advantage of having government machinery available for their campaign. No other candidate had anything resembling a national campaign organization.

In my opinion, the future evolution of the segment of Vietnamese population caught between the two extremes of communism and anti-communism could have a determining influence both on the outcome of the phase of fighting and negotiating and on the stability of the postwar period. One should note that, perhaps for the first time since America's entry into the Vietnamese war, promising trends have developed toward broadening the Saigon government. It was not coincidental that these directly followed President Johnson's decision to halt the bombing and to move to the negotiating table. In South Vietnam the prospect of a forthcoming settlement is already beginning to induce a shift in the priorities of interest of the Saigon establishment. As the conviction fades that the Americans will carry forever the burden of the struggle against communism, the military

regime may for the first time grant greater priority to concern for their survival and less to concern for control of power and conservation of the privileges of the present establishment. Replacement of the colorless and obedient cabinet of Nguyen Van Loc by the far more respectable cabinet of Tran Van Huong is a first important step toward broadening the base of support of the government.

What is not yet clear is whether the broadening process will result in progressive moderation of the stand of the Saigon regime toward some form of accommodation with communist elements in South Vietnam, or whether it will result in a progressive hardening of position of the factions supporting the Saigon government. At the time of this writing, two concomitant evolutions are at work: a broadening trend of government extending toward the relatively more moderate elements of the Vietnamese political scene, and a hardening of these elements under communist threats. It is not yet clear which one of these trends will be dominant.

In my opinion, if the end result should be an honest but intransigent government leaning to the right, its political support might be sufficient to stabilize it against immediate communist threats. But in the long run its popular appeal would be limited, because by its nature it could not undertake necessary social reforms and because military control of the government would be bound to assert itself again. In fact, the relative "weight" of Premier Huong and President Thieu depends on the support of the moderate factions. The more the base of government evolves toward the right, the less indispensable Huong (or for that matter any civilian government) will become to Thieu and the military.

One must realize that because of historical circumstances anti-communism in Vietnam is closely associated with the conservation of acquired privileges. Power and social pre-eminence in the government, in the army, and in business belong almost exclusively to one group of people: those who during the struggle for independence either contributed actively to the perpetuation of French rule, or at least accepted the French presence as a fact of life in order to obtain

privileged treatment -- in either case cutting themselves off from the mainstream of Vietnamese aspirations. Only fear for their own survival might make the present establishment agree to relinquish power to more moderate groups unhampered by vested interests in undertaking social reforms to make the government more popular with the population. Such leadership would have the will and ability to seek a broad-based government, dropping the usual tactics of "divide and rule."

For the majority of the population, although they are politically uncrystallized and leaderless, three broad aspirations have, in my opinion, strong appeal:

1. The desire for peace. Vietnam has been marked by war and violence for a quarter of a century, except for the period from 1956 to 1959. One notices everywhere in South Vietnam among the poor a nostalgia for the peaceful character of this period (even if it is often associated with a distaste for the Diem administration).
2. The desire for social justice. The popular demands during the period of massive demonstrations (1963-1967) were focused on ending outrageous privileges and corruption and establishing social justice. These demands, however, have never been formulated into specific measures for reducing income disparities and increasing equal opportunities.
3. The desire for a postwar regime neither ruthless like the communists (or to a lesser degree the Diem regime) nor arrogant, arbitrary, and corrupt like the recent administrations in Saigon. As I have already stated, this is the result of an allergy developed through painful direct experimentation with existing authorities.

During the period of negotiations, one might expect the position of the communists, and particularly of the NLF, toward non-communists outside the GVN to soften. Their policy might lean more and more to nationalistic objectives and might softpedal communist objectives, while making concessions in Paris. On the other hand, if the present

Saigon regime does not change, the prospect of an arrogant, unmotivated military clique becoming, through the negotiations, permanent rulers of South Vietnam might decrease the reticence of genuine non-communists to enter into a broader coalition with the communists. This danger could become particularly real if tensions between China and the Vietnamese communists materialize as the negotiations progress. For in this case the sincerity of the NLF's nationalistic motivation will not be doubted by the majority of the non-communists of South Vietnam.

If this happens, U.S. alternatives for Vietnam will be narrowed to either maintaining at any price a Saigon government with a narrow factional base of privilege and extreme anticommunism, or accepting a broad coalition already controlled by communists (with the consolation that Vietnamese communists will be independent from Chinese communists, unless a significant political victory improves Sino-Vietnamese relations).

In fact, the key to a compromise settlement lies in our ability to win over to our side a sizable segment of Vietnamese moderate opinion early in the negotiations. In my view, this could be achieved only if the U.S. government systematically pressures the Saigon military establishment for a further broadening of the government and makes credible to them its willingness to negotiate for withdrawal of American troops if certain necessary reforms are not undertaken. In a first step, the image of the present government could more convincingly reflect national unity if the Huong cabinet were enlarged to include diverse personalities.

In a second step, this new government would have to end the policy of "divide and rule," which constituted the basic tactic for political control of all non-communist governments from the French, the Bao Dai, and the Diem regimes to the present one. It must seek to ease distrusts and enmities among Buddhist, Catholic, Hoa Hao, and Cao Dai factions; help them to broaden their popular following; and try to work out a certain degree of understanding among them on a common program of action. A parallel effort should be made to strengthen certain social groupings, such as the students' organizations, the labor unions, and the like.

If these steps toward unification of the non-communist factions of the Vietnamese population were implemented, the credibility of the government's motivation for a policy of peace with freedom and social justice would be greatly enhanced. Even for a broad-based government, making the military accept some toleration of neutralist trends would not be easy. Nevertheless, this might be done by demonstrating that it is to the government's advantage to let these trends develop independently and as part of the political fabric of free South Vietnam rather than to repress them for future communist exploitation. We have stressed that communist exploitation of neutralist feelings during the phase of negotiations could be dangerous indeed. In the past, the "neutralist clause" has always provided a convenient excuse for silencing effective criticism. There will be no real freedom of expression unless this clause is narrowed to forbid only those who conspire to overthrow the government by force or other unconstitutional means.

Inclusion into the government's base of support of a nonaligned trend of opinion (one recognizing the need for deterring the communists from an aggressive strategy, and the danger of Chinese dominant influence over Vietnam) would greatly enhance the government's ability to mobilize the nationalistic fervor of the Vietnamese people. In effect, for Viet Cong followers and sympathizers as well as for non-communists, the sincerity of a government of such composition would not be in doubt in its search for peace with coexistence. It would receive broad support for a policy of union and tolerance with the objective of preserving the South from communist rule while helping the North to more independence from China. It would in this manner preserve the national identity of the whole of Vietnam while reestablishing peace and decreasing tensions.

III. STRATEGIES FOR ENDING THE WAR

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES AND THE LONG-TERM OUTCOME

Establishing greater stability in Vietnam and, more generally, in Southeast Asia is essentially a long-range problem. An appraisal of any short-term change should consider long-term effects. If one admits that (1) the United States cannot stay in Vietnam forever, and (2) that the communist regime in North Vietnam cannot be destroyed, then the long-term perspective admits of only two alternatives: either withdrawing, or else sufficiently strengthening South Vietnam's socio-economic structure to render the country immune to communist subversion. Even a communist fade-out or a settlement tantamount to a truce must be considered as tactical and incidental changes from the long-range viewpoints. So long as the non-communists in South Vietnam remain politically weak, the communists will be able and motivated to maintain a flexible level of subversive activities: they will lie low when our military pressure is high, and raise their pressure as soon as we reduce ours.

Thus, at issue is how strengthening the non-communist structure of South Vietnam can best be achieved through a strategy of fighting and negotiating. The latter strategy could aim at stimulating favorable political development, and at a settlement specifically encouraging coexistence between communists and non-communists (despite the risk of a potential peaceful communist take-over if the non-communists fail to strengthen themselves).

Another aspect of the issue is whether the communist appeal will fade with increased war weariness, or whether the continuation of the war (with its effects on the evolution of the Saigon regime) will maintain a continuous source of recruitment for the communists among the population as well as harden their determination. This study has indicated that the war has resulted in a polarization toward the two extremes of Vietnamese opinion, communist and anti-communist, while increasing the middle's aversion to both extremes. I have also stressed that so long as an end to the war remains remote, (1) the Saigon regime will be controlled by the military and the extreme anti-communist

factions of the Vietnamese establishment, (2) these groups will remain essentially concerned with conserving their acquired privileges and their control over the power structure, and (3) American leverage on the evolution of the Saigon regime will be efficient only insofar as Americans are willing to risk losing South Vietnam rather than support the present state of internal South Vietnamese affairs. Thus, I feel that so long as the end of the war remains a remote perspective, the communists will increasingly appeal to a sizable minority of the Vietnamese population, while the Saigon regime's base of support will remain a faction of privileged people (unless a popular uprising destroys the GVN; the consequences of these are unpredictable).

This study has also indicated that international and national unity among the communists will remain strong where they face vital challenge (war) or are victorious (for example, American withdrawal). Chances of developing contradictory interests and divergence of opinions within the communist world would be increased if the allied side, and particularly South Vietnam, adopted a moderate posture toward the communists and made a visible effort to achieve these moderate goals.

It is not in our power to coerce the communists to make a particular concession or to accept a particular settlement. What we can do is to adopt a strategy that would make all alternatives unfavorable to the communists in the long run. Only in this way do we improve the chance that they will choose an alternative economical to both sides in the long run, one that leaves the door partially open for the peaceful pursuit of further long-term objectives. The settlement should cover a wide range of diverse interests, encouraging the pursuit of as many overlapping and compatible interests as possible while discouraging incompatible interests. Such a diversification of interests would increase the chances of progressively emasculating aggressive communist designs in Southeast Asia.

I do not feel that our past strategy of intensifying the war and making it technological was wrong as such. It might be justified tactically. In fact, it saved South Vietnam from certain collapse in 1965; it has also forced North Vietnam to a certain degree of dependence on Russia, thus bringing about a greater diversity and conflict of interest in the communist world. I feel, however, that our past strategy cannot achieve

our long-term objective (unless we choose to physically destroy North Vietnam) because it has limited political impact. Once the tactical objectives have been attained, it may even be politically harmful, for it encourages the non-communists to think that this is an American war, it antagonizes the population by its destructive effects, and it divides American opinion while antagonizing a majority of world opinion. By switching strategy now, we increase the usefulness of our past one, for the prospect of returning to it would then have a net deterrent effect against the resumption of war on a large scale.

The communists may or may not agree to a compromise; but if our strategy succeeds in progressively and permanently improving the GVN and strengthening the socio-economic structure of South Vietnam, then the American involvement could be phased down to a role of deterrence against escalation. A moderate and reform-minded government in Saigon which has fully proved its willingness to seek a compromise could then blame a continued war on the communists. The confrontation would then be placed on its true ground: political rather than military.

A STRATEGY OF NEGOTIATIONS

Objectives

The above analysis indicates the following as main objectives of a strategy of negotiations:

- o To broaden the range of interests of the adverse parties.
- o To change the political context of the communist world and Southeast Asia to bring about a divergence of interests among the involved communist parties, and to increase the credibility of peaceful coexistence between North Vietnam and its non-communist neighbors, and between non-communists and communists in Vietnam.
- o To discourage communist expectations of complete control of South Vietnam, while creating enough incentives for co-existence and cooperation.

- o To preserve the unity of our camp during the negotiations, both regarding our internal opinions and the relationship between allies. A particularly important objective in this respect is strengthening South Vietnam through the process of negotiations.
- o To tailor our positions on the final settlement as a function of the changing political context and with a view to inducing a favorable evolution in the postwar period, in the measure compatible with our evaluation of the risks involved in the case of an unfavorable evolution.

The Time Element in the Negotiations

If our main objective is changing the political context to obtain the conditions for an optimal settlement, then we must accept a time perspective long enough to produce and consolidate the desired effect. Negotiations should be viewed as a "contest of attrition" between the development of "contradictions" in the communist camp and contradictions in our camp.

If at some stage we feel that this attrition results in a faster disintegration of our camp, then we must use our resources to bring pressure for a quick conclusion (or a suspension) of the negotiations. Except under these conditions, we will have to tailor our time perspective to the changing political conditions stemming from negotiations and from the military situation. Our strategy should then be designed to strengthen our ability to sustain protracted negotiations by relieving points susceptible to communist erosion in the long run. The most essential factors are (1) units of opinion in the United States, (2) morale of the South Vietnamese army, and (3) political coalescence of the South Vietnamese non-communists around a South Vietnamese government. The unity of the allied front, although very important, is not so essential, and is less susceptible to communist exploitation than are the three preceding variables.

MILITARY STRATEGY

We must strengthen, or at least maintain, our military positions while preserving U.S. credibility in the search for peace, so as to avoid internal U.S. and international pressures of public opinion.

This calls for a strategy of strengthening the Vietnamese forces' fighting capacity, and progressively increasing the ARVN role in actual fighting. While we are pressing for an effective de-escalation or for a cease-fire, we must strengthen our capacity to match the communists if they initiate an escalation. This leads to a policy of deterring communist buildups by strengthening allied capacity to strike and to quickly reinforce our ground troops in Vietnam through "peripheral reinforcements" by buildups in Thailand, the Philippines, and Okinawa. This could be done without mobilizing additional reserves by progressively withdrawing a growing number of U.S. troops from Vietnam as soon as the ARVN's military capabilities have increased, and by restationing an equivalent number in peripheral bases.

Measures should be taken to provide an ability to block Haiphong and to quickly send allied troops (American, Thai, Australian, New Zealander) to the Vietnam theaters of operations should the communists escalate the war. It would be advisable to study our available options -- from large-scale (non-nuclear) retaliation, to various forms of gradual response to a communist escalation. (The lessons of the past tend to make me skeptical of the effectiveness of gradual response in Vietnam; rather, I tend toward large-scale retaliation, for a limited period of time and after serious warnings in Paris.) All potential bottlenecks delaying quick reinforcement of troops in South Vietnam should be removed early in the process of negotiations (for instance, by economic measures such as increasing the stock of essential commodities).

The credibility of such retaliatory measures as blocking the port of Haiphong should be made evident to the adversary; but in the normal conduct of the war, escalatory steps with important international implications -- like coastal blockade -- should not be contemplated. As a temporary retaliatory action against major escalation by the communists, it might have a deterrent effect by its very political implications. The DRV would be

concerned about being squeezed by the Sino-Soviet rift. While Russia would be concerned about a possible confrontation with the United States while maintaining assistance to North Vietnam. A deterrent with political effects such as these might loom larger in communist eyes than purely military retaliatory actions.

My own impression is that we should give less emphasis to search-and-destroy operations, concentrating instead on improving the militia and the regional forces to quickly intervene in support of local defense of villages, and to conduct commando operations against communist controlled areas. At the same time, we should make it clear to the communists that renewed major offensives against the cities would be considered as a major escalation likely to induce heavy retaliation. Such a strategy will narrow the communists' range of tactical maneuvers by obliging them to restrain the scale of their operations or else justify any retaliatory measure we might contemplate. In this way, we create a certain bargaining leverage for our negotiations in Paris. Also, a strategy based on small-scale operations will ease (and accelerate) the process of transferring the main fighting responsibilities to the ARVN while shifting the U.S. role toward one of support and of deterrence against resuming large-scale operations.

POLITICAL STRATEGY

Our key political strategy aims at coalescing South Vietnam's extreme anti-communist and moderate non-communist elements around a broad-based government having a moderate program. The program's goals would include peace, coexistence, and saving all Vietnam from becoming the instrument of Chinese expansion. The program would also make clear an uncompromising determination to prevent South Vietnam from falling under direct communist control as a direct and immediate consequence of the settlement.

At the initial stage, U.S. policy is the only factor capable of inducing the military (who still control the Saigon government) to take a moderate posture and truly seek to broaden the government. In

the past, U.S. influence and interests in Vietnam were undermined by the belief that the United States would stay in Vietnam whatever the Saigon government did; this belief has been greatly diminished. Since then, the military's behavior has been more responsible: they have considerably restrained their efforts to divide-and-rule; they have replaced the puppet government of Nguyen Van Loc by the far more respectable cabinet of Premier Tran Van Huong; they have sensibly curtailed military interference in governmental affairs, making it less erratic and arbitrary; finally, they have taken a few steps toward implementing long-overdue reforms that will increase the army's efficiency and the honesty of public administration.

We can expect a shift in the Saigon government's power structure only in the measure that the United States succeeds in conveying its determination to tailor policy according to its appreciation of progress in improving the performance and popular support of the Saigon government. This means that the United States must prove her real willingness to write off Vietnam if it continues to be a meaningless cause -- at the same time making it clear that she will be patient if there is progress toward a government capable of politically competing with the communists. Only then might we induce the forces controlling the Saigon government to grant greater priority to strengthening the popular base than to controlling the government apparatus.

At some later stage -- when the popularity of some motivated and efficient members of the government has been established (at least among people in the cities), and when the negotiations progress toward a peaceful settlement -- the military's control of the government will be progressively eroded, increasing the chance that a new type of leadership, more closely related to the deep aspirations of the Vietnamese people, will emerge.

A moderate government, with a firm determination to refuse immediate and direct communist control of South Vietnam, must be established in Saigon before a true partnership can be established between Saigon and Washington for an efficient strategy of fighting and negotiating. Such an understanding between the two main parties would give the other

allies (particularly Thailand and South Korea) little ground for pressuring for a more inflexible policy.

Furthermore, the impact of such a development in South Vietnam on the patience and unity of internal opinion in the United States would not be negligible.

The credibility of the U.S. search for peace could be preserved by "specializing" allied roles. The Vietnamese government could initiate an intensification of military activities (not necessarily an escalation of the war); the "hard" allies (Thailand, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand) might initiate a hardening of our positions on negotiations; and a moderate U.S. and South Vietnamese posture will encourage divergence of interest in the communist camp.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The economic program during the period of negotiations should have as objectives:

- o To support our military strategy, particularly our pacification program.
- o To induce trade and complementarity between the cities and the countryside, and to increase the income disparities between the communist and non-communist controlled areas.
- o To develop interdependence between South Vietnam and the free world (particularly the United States, and other Southeast Asian countries).
- o To arouse high expectations for social justice and a quick pace of reconstruction and development if South Vietnam remains free in the postwar period.

The rural development program should be supplemented by material assistance to voluntary organizations (such as labor unions, student, Catholic, and Buddhist organizations) to expand their activities in the countryside. In my view, people-to-people programs would have more psychological and nationalistic impact than programs carried out by civil servants (even if they are "revolutionary" and dress in black

pajamas). Professional services in the countryside, particularly rural extension and health services, should be quickly expanded to support not only official rural development programs but also the people-to-people programs.

In the countryside, an extensive program of adult education through radio broadcasts should be launched simultaneously with a sales campaign of cheap transistor radios. The broadcasts should focus only on practical education and entertainment, and must avoid any propaganda for the GVN. The country has been flooded for years with overzealous propaganda and false promises; at this stage, much could be done to establish the image of a government that cares for the people by a program broadcast entirely directed toward helping people achieve better living conditions, entertaining them for no ulterior purpose, and helping them better understand their environment. Communist competition should not be feared; both our superior resources and our superior military power can give us a more extensive network ranging over more wavelengths.

Switching our military strategy from large-scale to small-scale operations will give us both direct and indirect means of more systematically building up complementarity between the cities and the countryside.

A direct means would be to launch a program of increased agricultural productivity by large-scale distribution of improved seeds (particularly high-yield rice wherever water control permits). Fertilizers and pesticides could either be distributed free or subsidized during the period of negotiations; when productivity has been increased, a sales tax on rice could be imposed to make up for the cost of subsidies. In any case, the program should be planned on a scale large enough to hamper speculation and corruption. (In particular, fertilizers and pesticides must be adequately imported, even at the risk of carrying over some surpluses.) The main purpose to keep in mind is creating agricultural surpluses to be sold to the cities, even if this is uneconomical in some areas (we can readjust afterwards).

This increased purchasing power should be matched by stimulating the supply and marketing of small pumps, better agricultural implements, small processing equipment (rice mills and dryers), small rotocultivators and consumer goods (including the transistor radios mentioned above). Concerning rice processing, storage, and trade, an authority similar to the Rice and Corn Administration in the Philippines should be set up to regularize and underwrite trade and storage, including insurance against war losses.

Indirect means might include distributing salaried incomes in the countryside (during the idle season between crops) for the construction of small irrigation and drainage works, small roads, school buildings, and so on. These should be subsidized by the central government directly to the villages, and should be well publicized in the villages to avoid corruption and to maintain flexibility and efficiency. All the above programs would necessitate relatively large expenditures by the GVN that cannot be matched by an equivalent increase in government resources. This must be provided by a substantial increase in economic aid, particularly the commercial aid program, but as part of a strategy of developing interdependence between Vietnam and free world countries, and of immunizing the politico-socio-economic structure of the country to socialization in the aftermath of the war. These expenditures are relatively modest when compared with the cost of the war. Their impact on our negotiation posture and the postwar stability could be very important.

The undesirable long-range effects on South Vietnam's economy of budget financing through counterpart funds, and import deficits, could be corrected if from the program's start the Saigon government clearly gives the highest priority to improving its tax administration, particularly the control and collection of income tax. In fact, launching such a program should be made conditional upon a commitment from the GVN to reach a certain standard of performance in tax collection. Such a clear cut, easily measurable commitment will have the additional advantage of forcing the Saigon government to make drastic administrative reforms (particularly, to emphasize selecting personnel according to performance criteria). If this is associated with similar

commitments on program implementation (for example, amount of fertilizer to be distributed at a certain date in a certain province), there is a great chance of progressively improving the Vietnamese administration. In addition, improving income tax control will greatly contribute to the image of a government committed to more social justice.

All the above mentioned programs, if implemented swiftly (the psychological impact of the time element should not be neglected), will contribute to raise popular expectations for economic progress if peace comes to Vietnam without communist domination. They will also lend credibility to the goal of building a society with more equal opportunities after the war. This could be completed by a program aimed at winning more active support for the government in the cities; such a program will include quick development of low-cost housing in the main cities, improvement of systems of public transportation, expansion of educational facilities, and so forth. Also, a program of training soldiers for a return to civilian life as described in the following section will strengthen significantly the expectation for a society with better opportunities.

Several things should be done to improve the prospect of postwar reconstruction and development, including engineering studies for a number of industries (sugar cane, textile, fertilizers, tools and implements, and so on), and even (if feasible) ordering equipment and forming government-insured corporations to undertake these ventures. I would even recommend immediately setting up a number of light labor-intensive industries for local markets and for exports. To relieve the manpower shortage for this purpose, labor should be temporarily imported from Korea and the Philippines in the form of paramilitary units, to be returned to their countries at the end of the war. A few specific agreements should be sought with Thailand, Malaysia or the Philippines for the purpose of building up a limited number of common industries (rotocultivators, transistors, electric motors and appliances, motor bicycles, pumps, pharmaceuticals, and so on).

DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY

Our diplomatic strategy should be calculated to convey both our determination to refuse any settlement leading directly to communist control of South Vietnam, and our willingness to admit a significant political role for the NLF in South Vietnam.

A South Vietnamese position favoring (or indirectly favoring) direct talks between the NLF and either the constitutional government or the representatives of the different non-communist groups is bound to foster distrust and divergences between the NLF and Hanoi, especially during the period of "two sided" talks in Paris. We should also leave the door open for a flexible process of North-South unification through bilateral talks on successive steps toward establishing a confederation. A détente with the USSR would be highly desirable as progress is made in the Paris talks and a climate of political de-escalation begins to prevail in Vietnam.

Some first steps toward practical cooperation between Southeast Asian countries, in concurrence with a settlement in Vietnam, should be played up when some spirit of moderation has been shown by the fighting sides. This will both enhance the prospect of developing cooperation in Southeast Asia, and broaden the perspective of postwar policies for the communist and non-communist Vietnamese, thus facilitating a compromise solution. In this respect, any improvement in South Vietnam and Thailand's relationship with Cambodia would greatly enhance the prospect of peaceful coexistence and Southeast Asian cooperation in the postwar period. Also, some French and Japanese initiative in producing cooperative assistance to Southeast Asia would be very helpful politically. The idea of a Southeast Asian conference sometime during, or following, the Paris talks should be sounded out. Increased activity on the Mekong project should also be launched at the first favorable opportunity.

From the beginning, we should also convey to the communists our determination to continue the war on a broad scale if negotiations fail, at the same time hinting that we are unconcerned about the length of negotiations.

IV. THE RANGE OF COMPROMISE SETTLEMENTS

THE OPTIMAL AND THE MINIMAL ALTERNATIVES

A compromise settlement in South Vietnam will have to accommodate certain incompatible interests as well as a range of parallel or convergent interests.

At present, the evolution of the communist world toward a polycentric structure makes for a fluid international situation. Negotiations and an end to the war might greatly increase this fluidity. Therefore, a compromise settlement should not be viewed as necessarily leading to a static situation. Rather it should be seen as an instrument adaptable to the changing political contexts of postwar Asia. Moreover, any evaluation of possible settlements must include an appraisal of their potential to bring about a favorable postwar outcome, as well as the risks that must be taken in case of an unfavorable postwar outcome.

In this perspective, the optimal pattern for a compromise settlement would engender cooperation between a non-communist South and a communist North within a broader scheme of Southeast Asian cooperation. Implementation of the settlement should be combined with a flexible and progressive phase-out of U.S. military forces. The NLF would enjoy the status of a political party in South Vietnam (with the settlement specifically protecting this right), but the Saigon government would administer the country and prepare the next elections.

The minimal compromise alternative would be a South Vietnam with a broad coalition government including communist participation, but also including long-term, built-in safeguards for South Vietnam non-communists and maximum possible conditions militating against a total communist takeover.

The following are possible built-in safeguards:

- o A lengthy schedule for U.S. troop withdrawal.
- o The preservation of a significant non-communist army.
- o Constitutional and international guarantees against the repression of minority groups.

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- o The right of free travel abroad for South Vietnamese citizens.
- o The guarantee of a South Vietnam open to all foreign influences and assistance.
- o Provisions for postwar reconstruction.
- o Provisions for economic cooperation with other Southeast Asian countries.
- o A flexible and lengthy process of reunification.
- o Involving the USSR in an active role in peacekeeping in Vietnam in the postwar period.

These provisions must be assessed both on the basis of effectiveness, and on their chances of enforcement through the machinery provided by the settlement. Their acceptability or non-acceptability to the communists will depend not only on the relative politico-military position of each side, but also on the evolution of the overall political context, and the political developments in South Vietnam during the negotiations.

In general, the more our strategy succeeds in demonstrating to the communists that prolonging the conflict will worsen their alternatives, the greater the chances that they will accept our conditions. Furthermore, if political developments increase the credibility of each side's peaceful policies following a settlement, there will be a greater acceptance of clauses intended to assure a peaceful aftermath.

The clauses discussed below are those I feel should be included in a compromise settlement. It does not follow that they would be acceptable to the communists, particularly in view of the present political context. Also, acceptance by the communists as a formal clause of the agreement does not guarantee enforcement in the aftermath of the settlement. The chances of compliance depend on the weight accorded, in the postwar period, to deterrence and incentive factors in the light of changing communist interests. (This point is discussed in Section VI.)

THE STRATEGIC PROVISIONS OF A COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT

North-South Economic Exchanges

Economic exchanges between North and South would both greatly relieve North Vietnamese food problems and constitute a convenient channel for North Vietnamese exchange with free world countries. At

present, South Vietnam does not need North Vietnamese production, but building up a systematic complementarity between North and South during the reconstruction period would be mutually beneficial.

The issue of customs duties in North-South trade is a delicate matter that needs further study. One solution might be a system providing custom franchises for local production or for the value added by local processing, but maintaining independent tariffs for North and South Vietnam. Discussions for progressively unifying tariffs and, eventually, creating a customs union should parallel the discussions on an eventual North-South confederation. A clearing agreement, with or without establishment of a clearing institution, must also be studied.

Circulation of Persons Between North and South

It might be of interest to explore the advantages and disadvantages of including a clause providing for free circulation between North and South. I am not sure that this clause presents any real interest for us. However, it could certainly be used during the negotiations as a tactical weapon (playing on communist fears of a second massive flow of refugees to the South), for instance, when we want to mark time and/or put the communists on the defensive.

A Lengthy and Flexible Schedule for Withdrawal of American Troops

This will be very difficult to negotiate considering the Manila Declaration, communist propaganda, and U.S. internal opinion. The best tactic might be to link the withdrawal of American troops to several conditions:

- o The setting up of a sizable force under international control, so composed as to give safe guarantees to both parties, and with a mandate allowing it to operate effectively and impartially.
- o Withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops, with an effective system of control and verification.

- o Effective identification of NLF units, to allow control by the international peace-keeping machinery. This should be accompanied by a parallel condition concerning the VC police and the effective disarmament of all paramilitary or civilian organizations.

The successive steps of American troop withdrawal should be completed only six months after successive implementation of the above conditions.

Operations could be stopped at any stage by one of the parties (U.S., NLF, DRV) if it feels that the preceding steps have not been fully and fairly implemented. Discussions and arbitration should take place without delay to redress justified grievances; until these are completed, no further steps should be taken.

Preservation of a Significant Non-Communist Army

This provision implies not only negotiating the clause in the settlement, but also immediately preparing the Vietnamese army for its postwar role.

If immediate action is not taken to improve motivation and discipline in the army (particularly among high-ranking officers), disunity and dissension can be expected once operations against the communists end. (This brings with it a distinct possibility of an attempted coup by the "fighting officers" against the "political officers.") Furthermore, the army's ability to withstand communist subversion after a cease-fire will be very much in doubt. Measures to improve the army's motivation might include:

- o Better pay for soldiers and, more important, better social benefits for their families.
- o Pensions -- or, better, assurance of decent jobs for the soldiers' widows.
- o Assured education for orphans of soldiers until they have learned a trade, and scholarships to make accessible a university education for the most gifted.
- o Introduction of mass adult education (with audio-visual aids) in the army. Even if this means a 20 or 30 percent reduction in fighting time per soldier, this will be

compensated by the reduced desertion rate and by the increase in troop morale.

- o Assurance that no one will be demobilized without having learned a trade or else having received two hectares of land and the means to cultivate them. In accordance with special homesteading laws, the recipient of the land will be assured ownership after two years of cultivation. (The expenses of education and land settlement are not additional burdens for the state; they should be viewed as part of the expenditure for economic reconstruction and development.)

Finally, besides these measures to motivate the rank and file, an essential step toward increasing the stability of ARVN in the postwar era would be to remove its generals progressively from direct interference with politics during the period of fighting and negotiating before military operations come to a halt.

No substantial restriction on the size of the South Vietnamese army could be accepted unless the North Vietnamese accept the parity principle, and agree to a system of effective control over all the territory of South Vietnam.

The size of the South Vietnamese army should be reduced only after

- (1) North Vietnamese troops have been withdrawn from South Vietnam,
- (2) either NLF troops have been integrated into ARVN, or NLF units have been inventoried and regrouped, and (3) paramilitary organizations have been disarmed.

Provisions Guaranteeing the Rights of Minority Groups

Effective guarantees protecting minority groups against discrimination and persecution are absolutely essential to soften the "win or fight on" attitude of Vietnamese's society's two extremes (communists and anti-cummunits), and make coexistence possible.

Our bargaining position would be far stronger if from the start we took a consistent position on the issue of coalition and the issue of political rights. In accordance with the principle of self-determination, if we reject communist demands for a coalition government of "all

representative" factions, we must complement the principle of majority rule with protection for the rights of minorities. This immediately implies recognizing the Communist Party's legal right to function without discrimination.

Minority rights should be protected as effectively as possible by a clause in the constitution of South Vietnam (recognized formally in the Agreement), and by providing recourse to international peace-keeping authorities capable of, and authorized to, thoroughly investigate any complaints.

Free Travel Abroad for Vietnamese Citizens

This clause is important for two reasons. First, it will aid in preserving a strong, non-communist political life. Non-communists will be more inclined to defend their viewpoint and denounce abuses if they know not only that their political rights are protected, but also that they can take refuge abroad if they suffer excessive pressures.

Second, in the case of a minimal compromise settlement, this clause is important on moral grounds. In case of a communist take-over, the United States can invoke this clause to evacuate those Vietnamese most threatened by communist reprisals. (It might also deter a communist decision to take over completely.)

On the whole, this clause is the best guarantee that the preceding clause (rights of the minorities) will be implemented. Like it, this clause should be incorporated in the Constitution. Also, the Agreement should grant authority to the peace-keeping machinery (acting in conjunction with foreign embassies) to investigate cases and deliver safe-conducts-in-lieu-of-passport if need be.

The Guarantee of a South Vietnam Open to All Influences and Foreign Assistance

This means the right of all countries to establish diplomatic relations and embassies on the basis of reciprocity. There would be no preferential tariffs (except in the framework of North-South and Southeast Asian cooperation), no discriminative import or export

quotas. A study should be made of how to prevent such "disguised discrimination" as the use of barter trade. The delicate subject of the indiscriminate acceptance of foreign assistance while preserving national sovereignty should likewise be studied. This clause, in view of the need for reconstruction, could be an important factor in inducing the development of an economic structure with strong incentives to maintain a free economy for South Vietnam.

Another clause to be considered is the one calling for preventing discrimination against foreign investments of different origins.

Provisions Concerning War Reconstruction

Well conceived American and international economic assistance for the reconstruction and the development of South Vietnam could be a key factor in preserving a free South Vietnam.

The development of agriculture should focus on increasing production through higher productivity, thus creating higher purchasing power among farmers and expanding the market economy at the expense of the subsistence economy. This will strengthen incentives for land ownership and increase resistance against eventual attempts at collectivization.

Light industry should be developed both to fulfill the demand for consumer goods created by higher purchasing power in the countryside and to develop diversified exports from light, labor-intensive industries. The objective is to strengthen South Vietnam's ties with the free world (and the high income countries of the communist world).

Regional Cooperation in Southeast Asia¹

Regional complementarity between South Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries (including North Vietnam) should be taken into consideration in planning the reconstruction of South Vietnam. Regional trade should be fostered through the process of reconstruction itself

¹ Vu Van Thai, "A Regional Solution for Vietnam," Foreign Affairs, January 1968.

by inviting the participation of other Southeast Asian countries, and regional specialization should be taken into account in the development of South Vietnam's postwar activities.

In fact, negotiations and a settlement in Vietnam should serve as a unique opportunity to launch a cumulative process leading in time to cooperation and collective security in Southeast Asia. Parallel to the negotiations on Vietnam, efforts should be made to prepare the ground for an international conference on Southeast Asia to take place as part of, or as a follow-up to, the current complex of conference and prospective agreements. Preliminary studies to determine the broad lines of an international "Marshall Plan for Southeast Asia" (with U.S. and eventual USSR participation as donors) should be undertaken.

Two alternative or parallel schemes should be considered:

- o A broad scheme involving all Southeast Asian countries from the Philippines to Burma.
- o A narrower scheme involving the riparian countries of the lower Mekong (extended to include North Vietnam, if it is willing to join, at any time).

V. THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN EVENTUAL BREAK
IN THE NEGOTIATIONS

In the light of the familiar communist approach to negotiations, it is important to assess the chances that the phase of "fighting and negotiating" constitutes a final phase of the war. This implies an evaluation of the possible consequences of a break in the negotiations. We shall consider three related aspects: an escalation of the war, the international evolution, and the impact of such a break on the internal political situation in the United States, in South Vietnam, and in North Vietnam.

THE CHANCES OF AN ESCALATION OF THE WAR

The drive of each of the adversary parties toward a better military posture and toward political gains through military successes while negotiations are in progress might lead to a break in negotiations. In fact, fighting while negotiating implies a subtle brinksmanship between the search for immediate results to improve the bargaining position and restraint to avoid a break in negotiations. A break might occur as an accident in the exercise of brinksmanship or as a deliberate decision by one of the parties upon estimating that the gains achieved through fighting and negotiating have put a final victory within reach.

With the present balance of forces, the second alternative appears unlikely. It is improbable that one party will make the miscalculation of estimating that it could achieve total military victory. Nevertheless, if a popular uprising takes place in Saigon and jeopardizes the very existence of the Saigon government, a situation might arise where political victory is possible for the communists. But even in that case, depending on circumstances, the communists might find it more advantageous to exploit the situation while maintaining negotiations to obtain a U.S. withdrawal.

An accidental escalation and a break in negotiations might come about if one party achieved important results during an attack and the

other side felt unable to re-establish the situation without additional means. (An example would be communist attacks on Saigon, jeopardizing the morale of its population and leading to retaliatory action.) Nevertheless, even in that case the contacts in Paris could serve as a useful channel to stop the escalation, provided that the credibility of the will to retaliate had not been eroded by indecision or internal political divisions.

Escalation might also result from overrestraint on the U.S. side, leading the communists to believe that the frontiers of brinkmanship can be progressively extended -- a result similar to that of the reasoning that led the United States to escalate the war in 1964-1968 through the theory of gradual response. This alternative is not so implausible as it might at first appear, if one remembers that the communist concept of fighting and negotiating is a strategy aimed at narrowing their adversary's range of combat options while broadening their own.

Also, the communists might come to think that an intensification of military operations would tax U.S. patience and build up the pressure of public opinion, forcing the government to an unconditional cessation of any bombing of North Vietnam. In addition, if the communists feel that provoking a temporary retaliation from the United States would have political advantages outweighing the expected military destruction, they might deliberately adopt such a course of action. One must remember that the communists characteristically weigh increased human sufferings or losses against the galvanizing of the people's will to fight. I would not be surprised, for instance, if they were to deliberately invite such U.S. actions as a means of putting down factional divisions within their own ranks.

Escalation leading to a break might also be initiated by a minority trying to force the hands of policymakers. This might happen if divisions developing inside the politburo were extended to include some communist commanders in the South.

Finally, an alternative difficult to counteract would be one in

which North Vietnam built up its military capability in the South while de-escalating the intensity of operations. The point of such a strategy would be to increase the pressure for continuing the total bombing halt while maintaining the credibility of a potential forthcoming general offensive and improving the North Vietnamese bargaining position. If this strategy achieves its first objective, continuing the total bombing halt, the North Vietnamese might further increase the pace of military build-up while decreasing the intensity of operations in the South. Concurrently, they might agree to discuss the North-South problem, but would refer all issues of the war and the political situation in the South to direct negotiations with the NLF. This new move will be intended to squeeze the United States into unilateral concessions, thus progressively eroding the U.S. position while strengthening their own. Meanwhile the communists would have bought ample time to prepare an offensive serious enough to trigger movements in U.S. public opinion for a quick withdrawal of U.S. forces.

Another break might happen at a later stage of negotiations, when both sides may have accepted certain steps in de-escalating the war or adopting a cease-fire, if it should happen that both interpret the respective commitments in differing ways. This might lead to incidents and a resumption of hostilities on an intensified scale. This case could be solved through the negotiations in Paris, but they might be delicate and long; meanwhile, it may be difficult to impose military restraint. It is possible too that the ARVN might precipitate an incident in an attempt to sabotage the understanding reached in Paris.

In the most foreseeable circumstance, if a break occurs it will be either in the midst of an escalation or following a military build-up, making countermilitary action inevitable. Thus, immediately after a break, war is likely to be intensified.

In regard to "limited war," once we have entered the phase of fighting and negotiating it would be difficult to break off negotiations and keep the war limited.

Avoiding a break depends on our ability to maintain a restrained

posture while preserving the credibility of a U.S. response to a progressive communist build-up or intensification of the war. This is not easy to achieve and would require close coordination between military planning and diplomatic moves.

In most of the situations envisioned above, the chances of avoiding a break and subsequent escalation of the war might depend on the existence of a credible deterrent to escalation and a credible U.S. determination to resort to this deterrent if need be. As I have mentioned, this requirement for a credible deterrent force could be met without adverse effect on U.S. internal opinion by early withdrawal of a certain number of U.S. troops from South Vietnam as soon as ARVN's military capabilities have increased and by replacement of these withdrawn troops with an equivalent number of strategic reserve troops stationed in bases around South Vietnam, ready for a quick reintervention into the theater of operations in case of escalation.

A commitment by U.S. allies (Thailand, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand) to send more troops in the event the negotiations fail would also be helpful. The possibility of mining and blockading the port of Haiphong should be kept open. (A strategy of stopping and then resuming the bombing to halt a process of escalation will be discussed later.)

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT AND THE CHANCES OF A BREAK

External pressure for a break in negotiations could come from China. It is unlikely that the North Vietnamese would give in to such pressure. But China might adopt a subtle policy of expressing reservations about the negotiations while providing unconditional support to the war effort. This could include inducing North Vietnam to break the negotiations, particularly if the United States and South Vietnam are making substantial military progress and the United States maintains a hard position at the negotiating table.

In any event, whatever the previous Chinese attitude, a break in negotiations would force the North Vietnamese closer to the Chinese.

This eventually is likely because of the need for Chinese assistance in the increased war effort and because only a close relationship will allow North Vietnam to use China as a deterrent to the United States escalation of the war after a break. On the other hand, a moderate posture on the part of the USSR during the negotiations would cause it to lose face with the rest of the communist world in case the negotiations fail. The Russians would then have no alternative but to harden their position toward the West.

Thus, international tensions following a break in the negotiations could be expected to be greater than at any time during the war. It would be difficult to control an escalation of the war in such an international climate.

Another alternative, remote but not to be ruled out completely, is the one where the Sino-Soviet rift generates such tensions that North Vietnam would consider breaking the negotiations to avoid being caught in the middle. Such a situation would demand skillful handling on the part of the United States, for it will be a time of great opportunity and increased risks. A softening of the U.S. position and an offer of cooperation with no strings attached might induce Hanoi to make a decisive move to the side of the USSR.

Internal Developments in the United States and the Chances of a Break

The emotional division of public opinion caused in the United States by the Vietnamese war has abated somewhat since President Johnson's decision in the spring of 1968 for a partial halt to the bombing of North Vietnam and since the start of negotiations in Paris later in the year. At the present, a U.S. initiative to break off negotiations would considerably exacerbate the division of U.S. opinion, unless this happens as a consequence of a clear-cut and significant provocative act from North Vietnam. But even under those circumstances, it might be more advantageous to retaliate against the North Vietnamese while still maintaining the talks.

In the longer run, if the negotiations do not progress, internal opinion is bound to polarize progressively again into two opposing views, one pressing for a break in the negotiations and a stepped-up war effort, and the other pressing for more concessions to the communist side.

Unilateral concessions would strengthen North Vietnam's conviction that they have a winning strategy, and could only lead to unconditional withdrawal if not stopped in time. Nevertheless, a provisional tactical retreat conceived specifically to strengthen public opinion for a firmer position might, under certain circumstances, present some advantages. Also, to satisfy the other side of public opinion, a stepped-up war effort without a break in the negotiations might be contemplated. To preserve the credibility of the government actions, the two apparently opposite steps envisioned above should be enunciated together as two successive steps of a systematic strategy toward a negotiated settlement.

Another factor that might have a positive effect on U.S. opinion is a steady improvement in the image of the South Vietnamese government and in the fighting ability of the Vietnamese army. A slow but steady process of phasing U.S. troops out of Vietnam (even if this is compensated for by an equivalent build-up of fresh troops in peripheral bases) could have the same positive effect.

Internal Developments in North Vietnam

By changing their strategy at the time of the Tet offensive and by moving to the negotiating table, the communists have narrowed their freedom of decision concerning the time perspective. Whether their reasons arise out of a conviction that they have accumulated enough results to enter the final phase of the war, or to avoid dissension and factionalism inside the Communist Party, they now have only two choices: to conclude the war through successive offensives leading to a final uprising, or to conclude the negotiations. So long as their successive attacks do not bring decisive results (which is very likely), or do not jeopardize the existence of the Saigon government (which is

probable, so long as the present political trend continues to develop in South Vietnam), they cannot break off negotiations without seriously demoralizing their cadres and greatly increasing the chances that factions will arise. Thus, one might safely assume that they will not break off the talks under foreseeable circumstances. (As noted, circumstances could develop under which the communists might deliberately provoke a U.S. retaliation, permitting them to walk out of the negotiations (temporarily).)

Another break in negotiations could occur if dissension between the NLF and the DRV were to develop to a state of near rupture, with the NLF opposing the negotiations. Such a situation is unlikely, but if it ever materializes the Saigon government would have a singular opportunity to change the whole Vietnam perspective by showing moderation and trying to win over the NLF.

Internal Developments in South Vietnam

At present the Saigon government has only a remote chance of inducing a break in the negotiations. But if the negotiations are sufficiently prolonged, the Saigon regime might significantly improve its odds.

Also, if the Paris talks should lead to some agreement on steps toward de-escalation, an ARVN initiative might jeopardize their implementation, thus risking a break. Since the Vietnamese army is in the process of increasing its capabilities, the longer such an agreement is in being, the greater will be the weight of the GVN in its implementation.

All this points to the importance of a continuous process of broadening the GVN toward the non-communist left during the negotiations. Until this stage and until a popular base has developed in the Saigon power structure, the credibility of the will of the United States to conduct negotiations to a conclusive end is necessary to responsible behavior from the present GVN leadership. In my view, the most detrimental effect of a break in the negotiations would be to stop the process of improvement in the Saigon government.

Only when, through the systematic use of the leverage of the negotiations, the United States has managed to bring about an irreversible shift in the base of support of the GVN and the emergence of a new (or a transformed) leadership supported by popular aspirations, could the negotiations be interrupted without jeopardizing political progress in South Vietnam.

VI. THE RISKS OF VIOLATION AND THE
CONSEQUENCES OF A SETTLEMENT

Past records on the implementation of the Geneva accords in Vietnam and Laos are not encouraging and illustrate the difficulties of enforcing a new agreement if the political contests of the post-Geneva period are repeated. This is the more so as one of the main deterrents against a violation, the credibility of U.S. intervention, will be greatly diminished (unless the present mood of American public opinion changes drastically; even in that case, American ability to sustain a long counter-guerrilla war will remain questionable). A settlement similar to the Geneva accords, based solely on the containment of communist aims, is not likely to lead to a stable aftermath.

The relatively effective application of the accords in Cambodia, compared with the failures in Laos and Vietnam, stresses that a continued climate of confrontation after the settlement increases the chances of violation. This is not meant to imply that if we are nice to the communists they will be nice or fair, nor that the factors that existed in Cambodia are present in the cases of Vietnam or Laos. My only conclusion is that, purely in terms of evaluation of risks, a policy like Sihanouk's, combining deterrence factors with incentive factors, stands a better chance of avoiding major violations of the agreement than does a policy of mere containment.

This section will examine whether an agreement that seeks to combine containment of conflicting interests with a broad range of compatible and parallel interests stands a better chance of implementation under one policy alternative or another. The section also attempts to determine the consequences of a violation. I assume the most unfavorable conditions: that the negotiations have failed to bring about a significant evolution of the relationship between Communist China and the Vietnamese communists, and between the DRV and the NLF.

We must distinguish here between risks of violation of the basic dispositions of the Agreement, and the more immediate risks of non-adherence to the cease-fire. The latter concerns clauses relating to (1) disposition, eventual disarmament, regrouping of troops, and so on, and (2) administration of different zones of South Vietnam and their re-integration into the central administration.

THE RISKS OF VIOLATION OF THE AGREEMENT

An appraisal of the risks of a violation necessitates an analysis of the main factors deterring or encouraging adherence to the accords.

Deterrent Factors

The strength and the trend of non-communist factions in South Vietnam are in reality double-edged factors whose influence might be determinant but whose effects are complex. If the non-communists are weak, the communists will be tempted to take over through the progressive control of the government machinery and the gradual erosion and factionalization of the non-communist groups. Since the expectations for final control will be high, the communists will have no reason to risk violating the accords. The Vietnamese communists are patient, and rarely have they miscalculated and acted hastily. The provisions and clauses of the settlement (discussed in Section III, above) will induce the communists to avoid taking strong coercive measures or undertaking any significant step toward socializing the socio-economic structure of the country, at least until they have completed their control of the government apparatus.

These same clauses, combined with a mild communist policy, might induce the non-communists to oppose the communists legally and peacefully rather than violently. This process will take at least a decade; during this time, the non-communists might still have a chance to unite and to strengthen their organizations, if they play skillfully on the clauses of the agreement. The communists themselves will be going through this period of coexistence in a non-socialized structure open to diverse external influences; they will have to refrain from using

coercive methods and will have to increase their appeal. All this is likely to transform them. Thus, even if this leads eventually to direct communist control, the transition has more chance of being smooth, with the hard-core anti-communists progressively leaving the country and the rest of the non-communist population having already worked out a practical process of accommodation with the communists.

If, during the negotiations and prior to concluding the Agreement, the non-communists succeed in strengthening their organization and uniting to a certain degree, then we must consider two alternatives, depending on whether the prevalent trend of non-communist rationalism is rigidly opposed to communism or whether it is flexible in its attitude.

A relatively strong nationalist movement categorically hostile to communism is bound to create a tense situation that might jeopardize the Agreement's chances of implementation and increase the risk that the hostilities will be resumed. If the United States backs this movement, the progressive escalation of the post-Geneva period could be repeated (modeled after Vietnam if initially it is not a coalition government; modeled after Laos if a coalition government is provided for by the Agreement). However, the provisions protecting political minorities and providing for economic exchange between North and South might have a restraining influence and offer a chance that this nationalist movement will progressively evolve toward greater moderation.

If the United States fails to support such nationalism, this movement's credibility in achieving its goals will be progressively eroded, and it will have to become moderate or else be discredited over time.

On the other hand, if at the time of the settlement a relatively strong nationalist movement, bent on preserving Vietnamese identity and national interest but not being necessarily hostile to communism, succeeds in emerging, then the chances of a stable aftermath are greatly increased. In fact, such a movement, if initially strong enough, might even make a coalition government possible without undue risk of final communist control.

It must be emphasized that my hypothesis insists that the movement be already strong enough at the time the settlement takes effect. This means that (1) the movement's leader controls the GVN (or constitutes the main core of a national non-communist government), (2) ARVN's high officers are not basically hostile to it, because of an improved sense of survival, and (3) it enjoys the sympathy of the army's lower echelons, is actively supported by many of the social and religious groupings in the GVN-controlled areas, and is fairly popular with the urban population. These conditions favor a stable situation for the reasons discussed below.

First, this movement will have great political appeal in the aftermath of the war. As it is associated with neither the American nor the Sino-Communist side of the war, it could blame the war and the sufferings of the Vietnamese people on the two extreme wings of Vietnamese opinion. Thus, the more the threat of a violation becomes real, the more this movement will appear as the way to maintain peace, and the greater will be its political appeal. Such a political deterrent is likely to carry more weight in communist calculations than would military deterrence.

Second, by its nature, such a movement can best manipulate an optimal combination of the deterrent and the incentive factors to avoid a communist violation. It can do this, not only by resorting to the provisions of the Agreement -- including the discussions on unification and eventual communist participation in the government, if it is not already a minimal compromise settlement and if the non-communists feel they are sufficiently organized -- but also by bringing into play such international factors as the Sino-Soviet rift and Southeast Asian solidarity. By threatening to align itself more closely with the United States, a movement of this kind, not normally aligned with U.S. policies, might wield a more effective deterrent than a regime permanently aligned with U.S. policies. All this does not preclude an attempted communist take-over, but if the non-communist organizations present enough appeal to warrant strong opposition to communist violation of the accords, then the prospect of an international crisis might make the communist seriously weigh the advantages

of coexistence with an independent but not uncooperative regime against the advantages of a violation. Furthermore, such a popular regime might substantially increase the credibility of a strong American reaction and a firm American attitude.

Besides the credibility of American intervention, the effectiveness of the international guarantee depends mainly on the relationship between the big powers, particularly on the state of the Sino-Soviet rift and on U.S.-Soviet relations. If the Sino-Soviet rift is consummated, North Vietnam's leverage on Russian attitudes might be diminished (the concern with preserving communist unity may have faded). If North Vietnam wishes to maintain her position between Russia and China (but not aligned with either), she must avoid creating situations where Chinese and Russian positions become opposed and where she will be forced into a choice. A violation of the Agreement might lead to such a situation, for China is bound to work for the enlargement of any incident, whereas Russia, in the case of a non-aligned South Vietnam, is bound to seek moderation, to preserve her influence in Southeast Asia. (The tenser the Sino-Soviet relations, the greater the Russian interests in Southeast Asia.) If the Vietnamese communists choose to violate the agreement and side with China, then the resolution of events might depend on how skillful U.S. diplomacy is in getting the Russians to participate in arbitration involving the Southeast Asian countries. In this case, parallel policies by the United States and the USSR might better halt a process of escalating violations than would a U.S. deterrent whose credibility has been eroded.

If the Sino-Soviet rift had not led to an open break at the time of a settlement, then the effectiveness of the international guarantee might depend on the relation between the United States and the USSR, and on U.S. policies in Southeast Asia. If, in the aftermath of the settlement, the détente is accentuated and the United States favors a diversification of external influences in Southeast Asia, the chances that the United States and the USSR will take parallel stands to stop an escalating process will be enhanced, particularly if a process of economic cooperation among Southeast Asian countries has been started

with U.S. and Soviet assistance. The above analysis points out that the machinery for the international guarantee will be most effective if it involves: (1) the United States and the USSR (for example, as co-chairmen in a Geneva-type setting, or through involvement of the UN Security Council; the latter would be less effective but leaves the door open for China's participation); (2) participation by a number of Southeast Asian countries (for example, Indonesia, Ceylon, Burma) in the peace-keeping machinery.

Incentive Factors

Reconstruction. A rapid reconstruction followed by economic expansion in both North and South Vietnam will greatly facilitate coexistence. First, it will encourage the priority of economic interests over political considerations, and discourage adventurism. Second, it will enhance the ability to obtain foreign aid (both Soviet and American) needed to sustain a high rate of economic growth. Third, it will increase the disparities between the development level of North Vietnam and that of Communist China. It is important that North and South Vietnam experience a similar growth rate, for a great disparity is a tension-producing factor. The stability of North Vietnam's regime will be threatened if its economic development lags far behind that of South Vietnam. Under such circumstances, North Vietnam will be faced with the choice of either destroying the regime in South Vietnam or else seeing its own existence become more and more precarious. Conversely, the regime in South Vietnam cannot survive if its development lags significantly behind that of the North.

Unification. As war weariness fades away with time, the issue of reunification will become more important. After a process of coexistence and economic exchange between North and South has taken place and has lasted for a certain time, a loose form of confederation might be implemented, thus satisfying (or at least not frustrating) the idealistic aspiration for unification. In actuality, the shape and geography of the country make centralized government almost impossible, and favor some form of federation or confederation. In the period after

the settlement, the prospect of forthcoming talks for unification might constitute an inducement for North Vietnam to respect the agreement and avoid friction with the Government of South Vietnam, particularly if the latter is not basically anti-communist.

Diversification of Influence. North Vietnam's interest in diversifying its external relations has been discussed in Section I, above. If the relationship between North Vietnam and China remains unchanged during the period of negotiations, we will have to determine whether North Vietnam still has a significant interest in diversified external relations, and if so, how a process of diversification would affect communist policies.

Past records show Hanoi's constant concern for maintaining good relations with Russia and the European communist parties when it was caught in the awkward setting of the Sino-Soviet rift. Standing sometimes closer to Moscow, sometimes to Peking, Hanoi avoided irrevocable commitments to either. In addition to political reasons, there were also economic considerations behind this behavior. Even at the time when Chinese aid was greatly preponderant to that of the European communist bloc,¹ the North Vietnamese considered the latter as very important because of its technological value, which was not available in the Chinese case. This was clearly expressed by Ho Chi Minh in an address to the National Assembly on December 23, 1959, where he hailed the role of the USSR as the leader of the communist camp in science and technology. Also, the NLF's program, as enunciated during its first congress in March 1962 (and often reconfirmed) states that independent South Vietnam will establish diplomatic relations with every country, will accept foreign aid from countries with different political regimes, and will wish "to form a zone of peace which will include also Laos and Cambodia."

¹ For instance, in 1960-1961 Chinese aid amounted to about \$500 million, whereas aid from the European communist countries totaled only about \$200 million.

There is no reason to assume a change in North Vietnam's policy in the aftermath of the war or to take the NLF statements as "pure propaganda." Taken together, they imply a postwar policy line where North Vietnam will at least be open to "all socialist influence" and South Vietnam will be open to all non-hostile influences. This line fits well with a Vietnamese communist strategy of "friendship with but independence from China."

In addition, the cultural revolution in China has introduced an uncertainty about China's reliability as a partner for economic exchanges, at least for the next decade. This reinforces the need for diversification of relations in Hanoi, thus making the above policy line very likely in the aftermath of a satisfactory settlement.

In the long run, if this policy results in a rapid pace of reconstruction and development of North and South Vietnam, the interests of the Vietnamese and Chinese Communist Parties are bound to become largely irreconcilable, whereas the ties of North and South Vietnam with other countries, particularly Southeast Asian ones, will progressively be reinforced.

The above analysis shows that even if the Sino-North Vietnamese relationship has not evolved during the negotiations, an agreement involving a wide range of diversified interests offers reasonable chances of implementation by broadening alternative policies for the adverse parties, thus allowing them to respect the agreement without frustrating their most vital interests.

THE RISKS OF NON-ADHERENCE TO THE CONDITIONS
OF THE CEASE-FIRE

We define the cease-fire agreements as including all the transitional measures relating not only to the cessation of hostilities, but also to the reestablishment of a unified apparatus of government in South Vietnam (whatever this might be) prior to the establishment of permanent institutions through general elections.

In the case where there are two administrations until the elections, the following observations apply to all the measures leading to the

unified government, including the organization of elections and the installation of the elected government. This is the most delicate part of the accords, and the period from the conclusion of the Agreement to the moment when all the above operations are completed can be expected to generate many incidents, and be more taxing for the diplomats, than the negotiation of the Agreement itself.

I believe that there are three important factors influencing the outcome of a satisfactory implementation: the schedule for withdrawal of U.S. military presence; the political context; and the discipline of ARVN. To improve the chances of implementing a cease-fire, it is extremely important that the phase-out of the American presence be dependent upon completion of all the steps of the cease-fire (as defined above), and also that each successive step of American withdrawal be conditional upon the completion of each successive step of the cease-fire. The acceptance of these provisions by the communists will, in fact, be indicative of their good faith in the implementation of any settlement. A refusal to associate the time-table of operations of military withdrawal with those aimed at re-establishing a central administration and a unified military command with reduced troops (or at least a measure of effective international control of troops and their movements) will indicate that the communists are aiming only at removing the U.S. military presence. This implies that the politico-military situation has evolved enough during the negotiations to dampen overly high communist expectations.

Concerning the political context, a process of political de-escalation between Vietnamese communists and non-communists during the period of negotiations itself might considerably ease negotiation of the clauses on cease-fire, and increase their chances of subsequent implementation. This again underlines the importance of broadening the GVN toward the non-communist left during the negotiations. Another factor to be considered is that as the GVN becomes broader based and improves its popular appeal, the divisions in U.S. public opinion will be appeased. And when the Agreement finally settles the war, the deterrent quality of U.S. military presence might be significantly

improved until a final withdrawal, and the chances of smooth implementation of the accords will also improve.

Finally, if there is a certain degree of discipline on the communist side, one might expect the measures to be smoothly executed by the troops, on the orders of their leaders. This is far less certain with ARVN, and underlines again the urgent need to motivate and improve discipline (as outlined in Section III, above).

CONSEQUENCES OF AN EVENTUAL LOSS OF SOUTH VIETNAM

One must admit that in a compromise settlement -- whether it is optimal (recognition of the NLF, without NLF participation in the provisional government) or minimal (coalition government but with built-in clauses creating a growing interest in coexistence and providing effective safeguards for political or other minorities) -- there is a distinct possibility of a final communist take-over of South Vietnam. But the analysis in the preceding paragraphs shows that a settlement bringing into play a wide range of diversified interests, and flexible enough to allow development of parallel and compatible interests, provides reasonably good chances that communist control of South Vietnam -- if it does come -- will take place gradually and without major violence or violation of the Agreement.

It then becomes necessary to assess the consequences of this take-over and to compare them with the consequences of a "victory" (return to the 1954 status quo) or an unconditional withdrawal (as already analyzed in Section I).

A "victory" does not eliminate the risks of a further take-over of South Vietnam through a general effort to spread guerrilla warfare all over Southeast Asia, most likely through a joint Chinese and North Vietnamese effort. In this case, the loss or preservation of a free South Vietnam will be entirely dependent on an overall struggle for Southeast Asia. It will place the United States between the two dread alternatives of either committing itself to a fight all over Southeast Asia, or writing off the whole area.

On the other hand, an unconditional U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam has a great chance of squeezing the United States into a neo-isolationist posture; or if this alternative is unacceptable, the United States will have great difficulties and a high price to pay to re-establish the confidence of the leaders in Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries to avoid their making a soft accommodation with the communists.

In the case of a compromise agreement, especially if the negotiations have lasted a long time, it is very likely that there would be no demoralization in Southeast Asia comparable to that following a "disguised withdrawal." The loss of morale might be compensated for by the conviction that the U.S. commitments have some limits; this will stimulate Southeast Asian leaders to improve the political appeal and efficiency of their regimes. Thus, the result might over time be a stronger Southeast Asia. Of course, the countries now strongly aligned with the United States might evolve toward a more independent stand, but this might ease a U.S. shift of policies in the postwar period and favor the launching of a process of Southeast Asian cooperation.

A progressive loss of South Vietnam over a period of time and without major violations of the Agreement, once the process of Southeast Asian cooperation is well under way and some sense of collective security has been achieved, is not likely to drastically change the further evolution of Southeast Asia.

Finally, if one agrees that the strategy of fighting and negotiating, and a flexible settlement, might bring into being a dynamic process of evolution of both the non-communists and the communists in Vietnam, then an appreciation of the chances of a final communist takeover of South Vietnam in the long run will depend on (1) how long Americans are willing to sustain a process of fighting and negotiating, and afterwards to maintain a presence, and (2) how long it will take for a viable non-communist structure to come into being in South Vietnam under the changing conditions of a transition from war to peace. There is no way of estimating these lengths of time. The factors influencing the unity and constancy of American opinion are very complex; some of

them are related to internal situations in the United States (civil rights, poverty, problems of the urban areas, inflation recession, and so on); others are related to the evolution of the situation in South Vietnam and particularly to the improvement of the image and performance of the Saigon government.

As for the chances of the emergence of a viable non-communist socio-economic structure, I have already mentioned that perhaps for the first time since the American entry into the Vietnamese war, there have been some promising trends toward a broadening of the Saigon government, following President Johnson's decision to halt the bombing and to move to the negotiating table.

With the present establishment squeezed into a choice between falling under communist rule or broadening the process of government, is it possible to expect a crystallization of nationalistic aspirations and the emergence of a new leadership? Observing past events, I feel that a process of crystallization of opinion among the population is possible, and could be a relatively rapid process, as demonstrated by the momentum of the Buddhist and the students' movements in 1963, or the extension of the acceptance of the Diem regime after the battle against the Binh Xuyen in Saigon in April-May 1955.

As for the process of emergence of leadership, I must point out that in view of the conditions prevailing before the negotiations -- and even now, with no in-depth clarification of the main issues confronting the Vietnamese people -- any political groupings in South Vietnam could only be based on group interests, coteries, and individual relationships. As such, they are fragile and bound to factionalize as soon as interests diverge and personalities or ambitions clash. Emergence into leadership under these conditions is essentially the result of an interplay of group interests, of shifting alliances, of ability to divide and manipulate. The leadership cannot be spirited, nor can it be stable, and its motives will always remain questionable to the masses.

A further broadening of the Cabinet and, more important, a moderation of the stand of the Saigon government allowing political personalities

to take stands on issues of war, peace, and social justice, might bring into the forefront strong leaders riding on popular aspirations for peace, social justice, and a regime neither ruthless like the communists nor corrupt like recent ones in Saigon. If this did not happen, then at least one could say that the non-communist Vietnamese had at long last had a real chance, and that either they failed or it was too late.

